Vasile Drăguț Dan Grigorescu

HISTORY OF ROMANIAN ARTS

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HISTORY OF ROMANIAN ARTS

AN OUTLINE

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The earliest signs of artistic creation on the present territory of Romania can be traced back to the remotest periods when man emerged as a thinking being in Europe. The longlasting *Proto-Palaeolithic* has naturally left but few traces of some artistic concern; the so-called *pebble culture* (on the lower reaches of the Olt river) has been identified owing to the presence of pebbles partially shaped into choppers used for striking and cutting. For the *Early Palaeolithic* (c. 480,000 — 120,000 B.C.) the traces of human activity increase and spread over wider areas in the centre of Transylvania, northern Moldavia, around Bucharest, and on the bank of the Danube, at Giurgiu. The technique of shaping the small biface clipped flint axes is of a certain importance as far as the history of forms is concerned.

Closer to a certain artistic sense are the tools dated back to the *Middle Palaeolithic* (120,000 — 100,000 B.C.) and unearthed in large numbers from the archaeological sites almost all over the territory of Romania. However, it is only in the *Late Palaeolitihic* (100,000—10,000 B.C.) that one can discover a certain concern for beauty in adorning both the implements and the ornaments people used to wear in those times. In the caves at Ohaba-Ponor (Hunedoara county) and Rîșnov (Brașov county) ornaments were discovered as made from animal teeth or from sea-shells.These latter ones suggest either transportation over long distances or barter existing between extremely remote populations. At Lapoș (Buzău county) a statuette carved in stone was discovered, probably an idol connected with the magic rituals of hunting.

The most important artistic creation of the *Palaeolithic* in Romania has been discovered recently in the cave of Cuciulat in northwestern Transylvania. Several engraved drawings and two images painted in red clay — a horse and a feline — have been found in a small cave (3.70×2.50 m). The drawing is simple and expressive, the colours are flat, never modelled, as it is almost always the case with Palaeolithic cave paintings. Dated about 10. 000 years B.C., the cave paintings at Cuciulat belong to the great family of European Palaeolithic paintings, being related to those in the caves of Spain and the South of France. They are surely signs of the magic rituale of hunting, characteristic of the beginnings of figurative art in Europe.

Towards the end of the Palaeolithic, during the period also known under the name of *Epi-Palaeolithic*, the concern for beauty — with or without a magic function — became predominantly independent and spread out. At several settlements of the Iron Gates area, as well as at the other end of the country, in the north of Moldavia, spatulas, arrowheads, hoes and daggers have been discovered. Their common decoration element consists of incised lines arranged in random groups which sometimes evince a sense of composition; the most complicated design comes very close to a meandering line.

The independent concern for beauty is demonstrated by what some of the art historians call "the sculptural monument of the Palaeolithic", the *idol of Cuina Turcului* (in the Danube valley). It is actually a horse phalanx decorated by polishing and incising. No doubt this is a work of art conceived as such, a "unicum" for the entire European Palaeolithic.

One of the most important chapters of Prehistoric art in Romania concerns the period starting in the 6th millenium B.C. The stable settlements, the cultivation of some cereals, the domestication of numerous animal species, the spinning, weaving, polishing of stone tools, the invention of pottery are as many gains that justify the term of "Neolithic revolution" and make the major characteristic features of human life during the period. The decorative art of this epoch is geometrically abstract: the form of the pots reveals exceptional skill and an undeniable sense of line and proportions; the ornamental motifs are traced with a firm hand and harmoniously displayed over the decorated surface.

During the *Early Neolithic* the façades of the houses were already decorated with relief ornaments obtained by imprinting meandernig or spiral lines in the moist clay; sometimes these motifs were enhanced by using red or brown clay. The beauty of that technique goes together with the delight taken in the finishing to explain the appearance of numerous tools fashioned in such a way that they are more than just household objects. The taste for adorning the body can be seen in the bracelets and necklaces made of sea-shells, in the small copper and, later on, gold ornaments. The development of the art of weaving is proved by the large number of loom weights discovered, and by the ornaments on many of the pots of that period. One should also mention the so-called *pintaderos*, clay stamps used in tatooing the body and in stamping patterns on textiles.

Nowadays the *Criş culture* is generally accepted as the basic type of culture developed on the territory of Romania during the Early Neolithic. As such, it is characterized by a refined processing of the clay as well as by a great variety of forms and ornaments; linear incisions that sometimes shape into triangles or zigzags prevail. Dating from the same period are the small figurines of women associated with the cult of fecundity, and the zoomorphic figurines. They are clumsily and schematically shaped, and can hardly be considered to have any artistic merit.

At the beginning of the 5th millennium a dramatic change occurred in the art of ceramics in the northern part of Transylvania and Moldavia, where the typological groups known as *linear ceramics* gained ground. At that time the pots were semispherical or very close to a sphere in shape, while the clay was grey in colour. The simple ornaments evince a careful organization in point of composition consisting of straight or curving parallel lines interrupted here and there by dots.

Meanwhile, a new typological variant, known as the *Turdaş culture*, was emerging in southern Transylvania, in Oltenia and Wallachia. It had several local variants, the most advanced of which took the name of *Dudeşti culture* after that of a village near Bucharest. The vessels are almost always the shape of a truncated cone; yet some of them are also shaped as amphoras. The incised decorations consist of bands inside which there are a few rows of hachures. Most often these bands meet to form angles or are disposed zigzag-fashion; yet more complicated forms and even meandering lines are also tempted sometimes. However, the most important contribution of the Turdaş culture is the large number of anthropomorphous representations, most of

them made of clay, a few of alabaster. The reliefs with anthropomorphous motifs on the Turdaș earthenware are rather clumsy, yet they evince an interest in the rendering of motion. By some of their features these figurines recall the Cycladic statuettes — the stylized head, the big nose and the body decorated with meandering lines — which suggests that the people of the Turdaș culture tatooed their bodies.

The last representative group of the Early Neolithic is generally known as the *Tisa culture*. It spread in the northwestern parts of Romania. The vessels belonging to this culture varied highly in shape and were decorated with incisions, and sometimes were also painted; the favourite ornaments were of the meandering type.

About the middle of the 4th millenium, the Neolithic communities were reaching a new stage of development. The earliest cultural group is known under the name of *Boian*. It spread in the Danube plain up to the hills area. The Boian ceramics seems to continue the experiments of the linear ceramics period, particularly those of the Turdaș culture. Most characteristic are the vessels in the shape of truncated cones of convex profile, with short semicylindrical necks, or the tall-stemmed ones resembling large cups.

However, the most significant innovation of the Boian pottery was, no doubt, its ornamentation. It was no longer incised in the moist clay. The vessels were left to dry almost completely, so that, after the incision, the most characteristic elements were reliefed through excision. The decorations of the Boian pottery — mostly meandering lines — recall the technique used for the ornaments carved in wood or stamped on fabrics. Still, the potters added an element peculiar to their pottery: white clay paste was pressed into the grooves left about after incision, thus giving the whole decoration a highly genuine expressiveness.

Related to the Boian pottery yet superior to it both in form and in figurative interpretation, the *Vădastra* pottery spread over the western parts of the Danube plain, covering almost the whole of Oltenia. Though they retained the basic forms and ornaments of the Boian culture, the Vădastra earthenware was executed with a surer hand. Their ornaments, heightened by the white or red paste filling the incisions, make art historians hold many of the vessels manufactured in the Vădastra workshops to be real master-pieces of the genre. The potters of the Vădastra culture possessed a clear sense of proportions, as the forms they created — particularly those of the ritual vessels — were extremely harmonious.

During the same period, while the Boian and Vădastra cultures developed luxurious incised ornaments on their vessels, the *Hamangia culture* emerged with a highly specific typology both in form and in ornament. The Hamangia vessels (northern Dobrudja) benefit of a certain moderation in expression, their contours are calm and elegant. The ornaments are executed by prickings arranged in continuous bands, triangles or zigzags. At times lines and zigzags combine into simple meanders; at other times the decoration is influenced by the spiral and curving forms specific for the Cucuteni culture, another important culture of the Neolithic.

The most important artistic creations of the Hamangia culture are the anthropomorphous figurines of great variety and expressiveness. Most of them are female idols associated with the cult of fecundity. Unlike these idols — of a geometric, obviously schematic vision —, two statuettes unearthed in the necropolis at Cernavoda place the small-scale statuary of the

Hamangia culture among the great masterpieces of the Neolithic. The statuette known as *The Thinker* represents a man sitting, elbows on his knees, face cupped in his hands. The accuracy in rendering the movement and in suggesting the contemplative attitude is so striking that it makes *The Thinker* hold a place apart not only within the Neolithic but with the entire archaic art on the territory of Romania. The second statuette represents a woman sitting, her right knee bent, also surprised in a highly natural motion.

The early 3rd millennium B.C., saw great progress in the development of Neolithic communities. Besides the usual axes made of polished stone, copper implements began to be used, and gold ornaments increased in number; the goldsmiths acquired skills which enabled them to make idols of relatively large dimensions. Ceramics offers most of the information concerning the culture of the *Late Neolithic*; its most important feature is the wide spreading of the painted ornament.

The *Gumelnița* ceramics took over the forms and ornaments of the Boian culture. The new culture spread not only in Wallachia but also over southern Moldavia and Dobrudja. Its pottery is fashioned in a great variety of forms, as tronconic, cylindrical, bitronconic, and pear-shaped vessels. They display a combined system of incised or excised ornaments, with addition of painting along the incisions. Both white and red clay paste and graphite were used, the latter's metallic reflexes bestowing a precious quality on the vessels coloured in red. The Gumelnița ceramics frequently used the incised spirals the spare areas of the vessel's body being covered with prickings.

The *Sălcuța* ceramics, akin to the Gumelnița pottery, developed on the territory of Oltenia. The ornaments were incised, sometimes inlaid; very often painting was added after baking. The elegant, prevailingly linear ornaments of the Sălcuța ceramics were said to anticipate the achievements of the Bronze age.

The potters of Gumelnița displayed great inventiveness in changing the contours of some vessele into human figures or animal shapes. The interest taken in figural images is also proved by the several statuettes carved in bone, some of them adorned in copper. Archaeological excavations have also brought to light some marble figurines. However, clay was preferred above any other material with the Gumelnița culture, and as such it defined one of the most valuable periods of the Neolithic on the territory of Romania.

Simultaneously with the evolution of the *Gumelnița* and *Sălcuța* types, another type of Neolithic culture, known under the name of *Decea*, evolved in Transylvania. It was directly associated with the Tisa group. The Decea culture was also prominent in ceramics, which produced some original forms: elegant cups with two handles and two-handled tall-necked globular vessels recalling the form of amphoras. Nevertheless, the main contribution of the Decea culture to the artistic treasury of the Neolithic in Romania lies with the metal-works. The gold sand in the rivers flowing over the area was the raw material from which the craftsmen in the settlements of the Decea culture produced rich ornaments. The most precious ones are those discovered at Moigrad in northwestern Transylvania. The hoard of Moigrad contains, among other objects, four idols cut from a gold plate, and decorated in the *repoussé* (hammered) technique. The most important of them, *The Great Idol*, measures 314 × 241 mm.

During the same period the *Petrești* ceramics made its appearance in the central and southern parts of Transylvania, as descending from the Criș

culture through the Turdaș one. The Petrești ceramics owes its extremely fine quality to the cleansed clay paste it is made of. The paste was modelled with such great skill and minutia that one might believe it was worked on the potter's wheel. A more advanced baking technique than in many other cultures of the Neolithic made the vessels particularly resistant and the ornaments stand out clearly against their surface. Most of the vessels are red or orange in colour with ornaments painted in black, red or white. The motifs are simple and based on groups of parallel lines; zigzag and meandering lines are often present; at times, though rarely enough, the spiral as well.

However, the most valuable achievements of the Neolithic ceramics in general, and of painted ceramics in particular, belong to the *Cucuteni culture*. Covering a widespread area over almost the whole of Moldavia, eastern Transylvania and northern Wallachia, the culture bearing the name of the Cucuteni village near Iași is considered to be the crowning achievement for the entire artistic production of the Late Neolithic. It was often held, by Romanian and foreign specialists alike, that the vessels and figurines of the Cucuteni type form one of the most important chapters of the Neolithic art the world over.

The number and size of the settlements belonging to the Cucuteni phase attest the high level of civilization reached by the representatives of this culture. The distribution of the dwellings over the common area, the construction technique, the decoration of the buildings, all these reveal both a thorough knowledge of territorial organization, and a subtle understanding of the relationship between part and whole. The regular disposition of the groups of houses — in parallel rows or concentric circles — is significant in this respect, attesting the existence of a guiding plan related to the type decoration peculiar to the Cucuteni art. At Hăbășești, a settlement belonging to this type of culture, situated in northeastern Moldavia, inside the fortified elipsoidal enclosure, excavations have brought to light two groups of houses disposed in concentric circles with a small square opening in the middle of each group, and dominated by a larger house. This bipolar composition of the settlement has suggested a formal relation to the ornaments on pottery. Their unity of style — for, as art historians consider it, one can talk of a style — is enhanced by the decoration of the façades with meandering or spiral motifs. As executed by pressing the fingers on the still moist clay or, in other places, by painting it, the decoration on the façades has been considered a major element of artistic expression for the Cucuteni houses. Unfortunately, archaeological research could find but few remains of the former settlements.

The vessels were decorated by combining several methods: incising, pricking, and most often painting. The basic motifs are the meander and the spiral; yet the execution of the ornaments is extremely varied so that it is rather difficult to distinguish definite typological stylistic groups. More often than not the motifs develop freely, no matter the form of the vessel. There are however cases when the ornaments are arranged in bands. During the most advanced stage of the Cucuteni ceramic art animal representations gain frequency, while the anthropomorphous ones, though present, are still rare. The range of colours comprises ochre, red, brown, white and black; yet never more than two or three colours are used at a time, with red or brown always the predominant nuances.

The Cucuteni ceramics is also characterized by a remarkable flourishing of the small-scale statuary. Archaeological excavations have unearthed a large number of female figurines obviously associated with the cult of fecundity.

The body is sometimes covered with incisions, a detail often interpreted as related to the practice of tatooing. Animal reliefs decorating some vessels and the vessels with an anthropomorphous shape should also be mentioned. They are telling proofs of a perfect knowledge of the effect obtainable by baking the clay and using certain pigments. In fact, the fresh colours preserved all throughout the millennia when the vessels lay buried are in themselves a proof of the technical perfection reached by the craftsmen of the Cucuteni culture.

According to most of the research workers the *Bronze Age* in Romania started around 1800 B.C. (although the date is still controversial), and ended about 1166 B.C. Although bronze metallurgy spread all over the territory, stone tools continued to be manufactured for a few centuries yet; bronze was reserved for the chieftains' weapons ceremonial vessels, and sometimes even for ornaments. Bronze Age in Romania coincides with the crystallisation of the proto-Thracian populations whose main occupations would continue to be stockbreeding and farming. The period must have been calm enough; the disappearance of fortified settlements is proof thereof. During the same period the *sanctuary*, a building of a special kind and function, made its appearance in the settlements situated in various parts of the territory. Thus, for example, a sort of acropolis provided with stone platforms, enclosed sanctuaries and watch towers, was discovered at Monteoru (Buzău county, northeastern Wallachia). No doubt, it points to a most important spiritual phenomenon, with deep-going consequences for the artistic creation: the emergence and spreading of the solar cult, which made the older traditional motifs of the spiral and meander organize into coherent systems suggesting the motion of the sun in the sky.

Although bronze objects were not numerous, this metal played a decisive role in the development of artistic forms. The so-called *axes with discs* — discovered mostly in Transylvania and south of the Carpathians — arrest our attention owing to their elegant forms and ornaments. The ornaments consist of bands of grouped lines or rhombuses, and of spiral motifs on the discs which are obviously solar symbols. It is most certain that the axes provided with discs were not so much weapons, as they were insignia of those who bore them, the military or tribe chiefs.

The various forms of ornaments — bracelets, fibulae, pendentives, hairpins — make up an important chapter of the art of bronze work. Their elegant forms, their rich decorations (predominantly spiral), most convincingly advocate the existence of a highly developed technique and of perfect means of artistic expression.

Closely connected with bronze processing was the art of precious metals. Ever since the Bronze Age it was to hold a very important place in the Carpatho-Danubian area. Its forms are harmonious, the contours are pure, the ornament, embossed or engraved, is elegant and discreete. Here again the most frequent ornaments are the spirals, either engraved or made by twisting the gold wire. "The whirling" spiral motif reappears suggesting the wide spread of the cult of the Sun. In the period to follow, the civilization of the Geto-Dacians reached its acme.

Ceramics was equally important at the time. Several stages of development can be distinguished, almost all of them equally significant for the emergence of a unitary artistic vision. That epoch is held to have witnessed the ethnogenesis of the Thracians; the appearance of various types of objects and

methods of metal processing does not necessarily imply a modification of the ethnic groups, but only borrowings occasioned by the trade relations. One can no more talk of independent — or at least autonomous — cultural zones in the Bronze Age, but of local manifestations of a global art of ceramics. It has been noted that the large number of varied forms and ornamental solutions are only variants of one and the same family. The ornament is almost always geometric, distributed over the entire surface of the vessels, emphasizing their form; in other words, it is *tectonic*.

The predominant motifs are the continuous or zigzag bands, the rhombuses, triangles, crosses, circles and above all the spirals arranged to form whirls, or a braided (plaited or twisted) motif anticipating the so-called "Greek waves". In most of the centres the vessels were baked in kilns with reduction; hence their particular black colour. In order to set off better the decorative motifs, the Bronze Age potters would resort to filling the incisions with white paste, a technique formerly employed to decorate the Boian vases. The same technique was used to decorate the earthenware of Tei (a district in Bucharest), Sighişoara (in the centre of Transylvania) or those discovered in the south of Oltenia (at Gîrla Mare-Cîrna and Verbicioara).

Under the influence of metalwork, the treatment of forms and ornaments often suggests the processing of bronze as the more precious material, which, no doubt, offered a prestigious model for all the artisans of the time. The urns belonging to this latter group are said to rank among the most beautiful Bronze Age ceramics in the whols of Europe.

Unlike the Neolithic, the Bronze Age produced a smaller number of statuettes, less important in point of artistic achievement as well. There is only one exception, the splendid female figurines belonging to the Gîrla Mare-Cîrna ethnographic group whose representation shows that the ritual theme of fecundity had been discarded. The women wear rich garments, and girdles, necklaces and various pendentives made of bronze. Similar in form, the statuettes of Cîrna are widely different in point of decoration, although the ornamental motifs belong to the same family. Here again we can distinguish the direct relationship with the metalwork, yet with additions from weaving and woven materials. The ceramics also demonstrates that by the Late Bronze Age society had reached a high level of development, with differences in social rank which generated adequate ceremonial costumes.

Starting with the 12th century B.C. the first instances of iron processing are recorded in the Carpatho-Danubian area, marking the beginnings of a new historical period. Archaeologist agree to divide the Iron Age into two long periods bearing the names of *Hallstatt* (1150—450 B.C.) and *La Téne* (450—100 B.C.), after their most representative cultural centres in Europe. The early Iron Age — in its turn divided into several subperiods — is characterized by the transition from the Bronze Age at the beginning. Few in number at first, the objects made of iron could not yet compete with the bronze ones. Bronze objects started to be produced in large numbers; this is proved by the discovery of important deposits, such as the one at Drajna de Jos (Prahova county, northern Wallachia) consisting of 240 bronze items of which 199 sickles. Used for weapons (a splendid sword was unearthed at Cobor, in the south of Transylvania), for harness parts, for various types of tools and for ornaments, bronze metallurgy flourished all over the territory, testifying to a comparatively unitary economic structure.

The early Hallstatt pottery is closely related to the ceramics of the Bronze Age. However, the discoveries in southwestern and southern Oltenia

reveal a gradual change in forms and decoration. Thus, for instance, although the decoration still preserves its geometric form, it is based on fluting now — whence the name of *fluted ceramics* for the pottery in the western and northern parts of the territory. A new style emerged in the south and east of the country, as derived from the artistic heritage of Gîrla Mare-Cîrna ceramics, and reprezented by the groups of *Insula Banului* (in the southwest) and Cozia (Iași county, in the northwest). Most of the vessels are bitruncated, dark brown or black. The surface is carefully polished, the direction of polishing being an almost permanent feature of the pottery during this period.

During the middle Hallstatt (c. 800-c. 550 B.C.) a unification of the Thracian tribes living on this territory must have occurred; this would explain the widespread area for the same type of ceramics known under the name of *Basarabi* (after the name of a village situated in the south of Oltenia). It preserved the same baking technique and the same repertory of exclusively geometric ornaments — made through incision, stamping and seldom through excision — peculiar to the previous epoch. The decoration is tectonic in character and it is set off by polishing the surface of the pot with a stone before baking. The decorative repertory of the Basarabi ceramics includes a large variety of motifs — meanders, rhombuses, zigzags, bands, flutes, star-shaped combinations, or whirling spirals. The Basarabi ceramics is considered to be a clear expression of Geto-Dacian art on Romania's territory. A higher stage in the evolution started by the Basarabi ceramics was reached by the stylistic group known as *Ferigile*, after a village in Vîlcea county (northeastern Oltenia).

Even before the end of the first Iron Age period, the Geto-Dacian tribes had met with new cultural experiences as a result of important demographic and historical mutations; more often than not these mutations were caused by the trade interests which were stimulated in their turn by the social and economic development of human society in the European Mediterranean area. Of an outstanding importance were the Greek colonies formed on the Black Sea coast and on the lower course of the Danube. The chronicle of Eusebios records the foundation, by the colonists coming from Miletus, of the city of *Histria* in the north of Dobrudja in 657 B.C. (Its name is derived from Istros, the ancient Greek name for the Danube.) One century later colonists coming from Pontia Heraclea founded the city of *Callatis* (on the territory of the present town of Mangalia, in the south of Dobrudja) and towards the end of the same century, the colonists from *Histria* took part in the foundation of *Tomi* (Constanța today).

The Greek colonies carried on not only trade, and later on political and military relations with the Geto-Dacians, but also cultural ones. They brought over architectural and artistic elements which were absorbed by the natives; at the same time various ceramic and metal items of obvious Geto-Dacian origin were found inside the Greek cities. Enclosed by tall walls, provided with public buildings made of stone and marble, the colonies situated on the Pontic shore introduced here the Aegean architecture and town planning. The coexistence of two types of culture is demonstrated among others, by the presence at Histria of a temple of Aphrodite (erected in the 5th century B.C. and destroyed ever since the ancient times) and of a temple dedicated to a Thracian divinity, the Great God (a very austere looking building in Doric style erected during the 3rd c. B.C.).

Ornamental, monumental and funerary sculpture holds an important place in the artistic culture of Greek colonies. A fragment from a marble

frieze representing a hunting scene was discovered at Callatis, dating probably from the Hellenistic period (3rd—2nd century B.C.). The absence of high-quality stone quarries explains why statuary could not find favourable grounds of development in the Greek colonies of Dobrudja. Instead, a rich production of clay statuettes in imitation of the famous Tanagra figurines is to be noted. The vessels — both brought over from Greece, and produced in the Pontic colonies — were good examples for the Geto-Dacian potters who adopted certain forms and decorative elements of the Greek ceramics, including the painted representations.

Some of the most representative achievements of Geto-Dacian ceramics are the so-called "Megarian" or "Delian" bowls (having had as models the vessels brought from Megara or Delos). As made in the 2nd and 3rd centuries B.C. they were characteristic of the workshops on the Danube plain. Actually, the cultural relations of Greece with the Thracian territories north of the Danube had started much earlier, even since the dawn of Greek civilization: Dionysos and Orpheus holding such an important place in the creation of Greek mythology, were coming from Thracia, which precludes any unilateral interpretation of the exchange of influences between the two cultural zones.

During the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. the Scythians exerted a powerful influence over the Geto-Dacian artisans as well. Archaeological research works have demonstrated that Scythian influence should not be held as the effect of an invasion. Owing to a great socio-economic flourishing, Scythian metallurgy had developed to a great extent, its influence spreading to the remotest places. The Geto-Dacian craftsmen soon assimilated it; during the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., they produced numerous works highly regarded by specialists: circular bronze mirrors with cleverly decorated handles (the kneeling stag was a frequent motif, especially with the Transylvanian workshops), ornaments for the quivers (in Moldavia), harness pieces (in Dobrudja), short daggers (in Oltenia and Moldavia), the emblem-sword unearthed at Medgidia (central Dobrudja), the bronze statuette of Năeni (Buzău county, northeastern Wallachia), the bronze cauldrons discovered in the north of Moldavia, in Dobrudja and the east of Wallachia, all of them testifying to the high level of development of Scythian art, and to the abilities the Geto-Dacian craftsmen had reached.

The influence of Scythian art is also visible in several stone statues of the menhir type, like those in Transylvania (at Baia de Criș, Hunedoara county) or in Dobrudja (at Stupina and Sibioara). Although barely modelled stone blocks they manage to suggest the figures of armed warriors. The severe reduction of details is balanced by the expressiveness of the ensemble.

One conclusion is unequivocally obvious: during the centuries that elapsed from Iron Age II the Geto-Dacian society was able to assimilate other cultures and to achieve original syntheses whereby elements taken over from the populations which it had come into contact with, were harmoniously integrated into the traditional fund. Geto-Dacian culture had reached the end of a whole period of evolution, and was preparing to contribute its full share to the culture of ancient Europe.

The treasures discovered in the various regions of the territory inhabited by the Geto-Dacians clearly reveal their high level of development. A gold helmet, for instance, decorated with engravings and embossed motifs, was discovered at Poiana Coțofenești (Prahova county). The ornaments are predominantly figural, with remarkable sacrificial scenes decorating the two cheek-

-guards. The partly gilt silver helmet unearthed at Agighiol (northern Dobrudja) is very similar to the gold helmet of Coţofeneşti; it evinces a real unity of conception although the ornamental details are not identical. Both pieces must have belonged to some military chieftains of the 5th or 4th century B.C. The treasure unearthed at Craiova (in the centre of Oltenia) dates from the 4th century B.C. and consists of twenty-eight silver appliqué ornaments decorated with stylized animal motifs or with spiral-like combinations remarkable in their execution; the appliqué ornaments in the shape of bulls clearly point to the cult of the sun.

The treasures of Peretu (Teleorman county, in the south of Wallachia) and of Poroina Mare (in the west of Oltenia) are particularly important as they reveal the great material and artistic development the Geto-Dacians had reached around 300 B.C. At Peretu a rich funeral inventory was discovered in a tumular grave: a battle chariot, a silver helmet, silver and bronze vessels, ornaments and parts of a harness, earthenware. The human head made of silver and partly gilded is quite representative for the art of the period, pointing to the existence of figural sculpture with the Geto-Dacians. A rhyton, discovered at Poroina, demonstrates the relationships with the Greek world; it is richly decorated with anthropomorphous ornaments in which one can trace the assimilation of Aegean applied metal arts.

The contact with the Celtic tribes — that moved east from 280 to 270 B.C. — also left their imprint on the Geto-Dacian metalwork and ceramics. Weapons and ornaments, bronze bracelets, fibulae, buttons, figurines, helmets bearing the influence of Celtic art were discovered in Transylvania especially. Numerous Celtic vessels have been unearthed from the necropolis of Apahida, near Cluj. They are characterized by elegant shapes, particularly the urns, and by very simple decoration in bands.

The production of coins is one of the most significant of metalwork in the Geto-Dacian area during this epoch. Taking as models the tetradrachms of king Philip II of Macedonia (with the figure of Zeus on the obverse and a horseman on the reverse) or the coins of Alexander the Great, the Geto-Dacian craftsmen minted coins out of a silver and copper alloy. The number of workshops where coins were minted must have been large enough considering the many variants of coins spread over different areas of Oltenia, centre of Wallachia, south of Transylvania or of Moldavia.

The Art of Greco-Roman Antiquity

During the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., under the leadership of efficient chieftains often called kings in the documents of the time — Rhemaxos, Oroles, Rubobostes — the Geto-Dacian tribes developed greatly in point of economy and politics. A characteristic feature of the time was the foundation of unions of tribes heralding the setting up of a unified state.

Around 100 B.C. settlements of the "dava" type, characteristic of the Geto-Dacians, became more and more numerous. They were economic, political, military and religious centres of a marked urban character (the Greek documents recorded them as *polis*, cities). Both written documents and archaeological research demonstrate the existence of a large number of fortified

settlements dating from the 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D., i.e. from the most flourishing period of the Geto-Dacian culture.

Early in the 1st century B.C., Burebista founded the first centralized Dacian state. Conditions were thus created for a strong assertion of the cultural elements belonging to the autochthonous tradition. The most representative creation of the Geto-Dacians at the time was mostly connected with town planning. As a rule their cities were situated on mountain peaks or hilltops which could be more easily defended. The fort proper was built on the highest ground; terraces were laid out around it for dwellings, workshops, stables. In the plains, the defensive system consisted of earthen walls and stockades, while in the mountains stone walls were erected.

The most important defensive system, together with a large sanctuary, was situated in the south of Transilvania, in the Sebeș Mountains; *Sarmizegetusa*, the capital of king Decebalus, was to stand there later on. Over a vast area, defensive fortresses such as those of Blidaru, Costești and Fețele Albe were built on mountain tops. The main fortress rose in the centre of the fortified system. The walls, sometimes three metres thick, were built of large stone blocks fixed up with a mixture of earth and stone. For greater stability the blocks of the two faces of a wall were reinforced with thick wooden beams connecting them. This reinforcing technique, never met with other peoples, was called *murus dacicus* by the Romans. Sometimes the more important buildings had roofs of tiles.

The Geto-Dacian sanctuaries were unparalleled in the ancient world owing to their architecture and the organization of the buildings. The sanctuary of Sarmizegetusa consists of three terraces situated on the steep slope of the mountain. Monumental steps connected the terraces on which there were two kinds of sanctuaries: circular and rectangular (of six or even more rows of columns supported by massive bases). The great circular sanctuary of Sarmizegetusa is delimited spatially by andesite pillars; they have been interpreted as a transposition in stone of the Dacian calendar. It is certain that the oldest rectangular temples at Sarmizegetusa date from Burebista's time. Later on there were transformations and aggrandizements, most of them during the reign of Decebalus.

Although stone was often used for various edifices, most of the Geto-Dacian houses were built of wood. The houses, usually rectangular in shape, yet sometimes with apses or even round, were built of strong wooden logs and covered with thatch, and seldom with tiles. Many of them had verandahs, a very old traditional element, which was to be preserved in Romanian architecture. The massive doors were decorated with iron hinges and nails. Sometimes the walls were covered with painted colour decorations on the clay plaster. The archaeological excavations and the reliefs on Trajan's Column, and particularly the large number of varied tools used in fashioning wood, bear evidence to the aspect of Geto-Dacian houses. Although the buildings made of wood have disappeared along the millennia, archaeological evidence and historical sources prove that woodwork held a prominent place in Geto-Dacian creations and provided a highly representative background for the settlements of the Romanians' forebears.

Side by side with woodwork there was a strong development of metallurgy: centres for metal processing are attested all over the territory inhabited by the Geto-Dacians. Besides weapons and tools, numerous pieces of silverware such as ornaments, helmets and goblets were produced. The treasures of Slimnic (in the south of Transylvania), Senereuș and Șaieș (eastern Transyl-

vania), Herăstrău (Bucharest) contain numerous torsaded bracelets. At Sîncrăieni (in eastern Transylvania), fifteen hammered and engraved silver post were found, their ornamental motifs consisting of spirals, Greek waves or stylized vegetal motifs. The vessels discovered at Sîncrăieni have the aspect of stemmed goblets supported by a base, with two handles, seldom with one only. The whole ensemble of Sîncrăieni is remarkable indeed owing to the great number of pieces and to their stylistic unity.

The Geto-Dacian ceramics, descending from a powerful autochthonous tradition, shows great variety of forms. The Geto-Dacian potters used the rapid wheel, although hand-made vessels were common as well. Their forms speak both of the persistence of the local tradition — deriving sometimes from the Neolithic pottery — and of the impact of Greek culture penetrating through the trade exchanges with such cities as Delos and Megara, especially. The decoration is simple yet of a great refinement which partly comes from the alternation of the: black clay with the polished areas; and under the influence of Greek pottery incised or painted ornamentation is also present sometimes. However, the existence of a specific Dacian artistic vision is also highly witnessed especially with painted ceramics whereby anthropomorphous and zoomorphic elements are employed freely and with a great deal of imagination, while the chromatic range is reduced to reds and browns.

In A.D. 101—102 and 105—106 the Roman armies led by Emperor Trajan waged war against the Dacians headed by king Decebalus. Superiority in number of soldiers and weaponry were decisive factors in securing the Roman victory, despite the Dacians' prolongued and brave resistance. To facilitate the passage of the Roman legions north of the Danube, a wooden bridge with monumental portals at both ends was built at Drobeta (today Turnu Severin). Its author was the famous architect Apollodorus of Damascus, who also built Trajan's Forum and Column in Rome.

As a province of the Roman Empire Dacia was subjected to energetic changings, the conquerors forcing their culture and civilization on the whole country. For several centuries onwards, the Roman artistic forms were to be massively introduced in the territory of former Dacia. At times, Roman works of art were brought over from other parts of the Empire, at other times however they were produced on the spot. Nevertheless, a great part of them were the result of a synthesis achieved with the participation of the local artistic traditions. Hence, the artistic phenomenon in Dacia was to acquire new expression, allowing thus for the denomination of Dacian-Roman art.

The contacts with the various forms of Roman culture had actually been of long standing, dating back to the early years of the Empire, when Dobrudja (Scythia Minor) became a Roman province, and this way a gate through which Roman culture and civilization penetrated Dacia.

After the conquest of Dacia, the Romans built a whole network of roads defended by military *castra* and fortified cities. They also built an impressive number of edifices over a very short period of time. The capital of the province, Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica, was founded in A.D. 108—110. The new city adopted the Greek plan with streets crossing at right angles; the axial streets intersected to form the main square of the city. Archaeological and historical sources led to the conclusion that several monumental edifices — temples, basilicas, patricians' residences — were built in Ulpia Traiana. The existence of public baths (thermae) is also attested, as well as those of an important religious institution (the so-called *Aedes Augustalium*, of which unfortunately only ruins are extant) and of an amphitheatre seating 500.

On a smaller scale, Apulum (Alba Iulia today), Porolissum (Moigrad, in western Transylvania), Napoca (Cluj), Potaissa (Turda) and others reveal the Romans' outlook on town planning, as well as their competence in using building materials and ornaments. By using with great skill both large-sized blocks of dressed stone and brickwork, sometimes by alternating stone and brick, the Romans introduced into Dacia several characteristic architectural programmes. Large *castra* were built throughout the territory, particularly in Transylvania, Oltenia and Dobrudja. Monumental thermae were erected not only at Ulpia Traiana but also at Drobeta and Tomi, floors decorated with mosaic and walls faced with marble.

Besides the constructions within the city precincts, one should also mention the *villa rustica*, county residences of the nobility, often very large and with numerous outhouses. Stone and bronze statues often decorated public and residential areas. A very expressive bronze head of Emperor Decius (249—251) was discovered at Ulpia Traiana; fragments of an equestrian bronze statue of Emperor Caracalla (211—217) were excavated at Porolissum, the stone statue of an emperor — probably Hadrian (117—138) — was found at Apulum. Statues of divinities must have been very numerous as well, so far, the most important discovery is the statue of Jupiter found at Apulum. Monumental in size, the god is seated on a throne, obviously in imitation of the prototype created by Phidias at Olympia, which very often served as model in ancient times. Highly significant for their genuine artistic value are the sculptures discovered at Tomi (*Fortuna* and *Pontus*), and the strange figure — never met in the ancient iconography before — of a divinity resembling a serpent, a ram and a lion, at Ocna Mureș, in Transylvania (*Hecate*), at Potaissa (*Venus Pudica*, a bronze statue). Particularly important are the numerous reliefs describing sacrifices to Mithras, and those featuring the Thracian knight, a local divinity whose function is still not very well identified. The presence of the autochthonous Thracian mythologic element alongside the Roman elements and the ones brought over from Asia Minor, shows how complex the cultural synthesis achieved in the Daco-Roman area was. It also proves an equally important fact: the persistence of local traditions attesting an original culture which cannot be interpreted as a simple reverberation of the Roman models.

As a matter of fact, numerous proofs testify to the cultural continuity on the Dacian territory: funerary reliefs and steles, anniversary inscriptions and inscriptions celebrating the civic deeds of the inhabitants. The local culture produced personalities attested by documents, such as the sculptor Claudius Baturnius of Ulpia Traiana.

Beyond doubt, the most important achievement of monumental sculpture in Roman Dacia was the triumphal monument *Tropaeum Trajani* of Adamclisi (western Dobrudja), erected by Emperor Trajan in A.D. 109 to commemorate his victory over the Dacians in coalition with the Sarmatians in A.D. 101—102. The composition was very simple: a platform provided with steps supported a large cylindrical base with a roof made of stone slabs in the shape of fish scales. The roof was crowned with an octagonal prism, bearing on its top the usual emblems of a triumphal trophy. The monumental proportions (30 metres in diametre, 42.40 metres in height) made it visible from a great distance. The cylindrical plinth was covered with a band of metopes representing battle scenes, images of Dacian men and women, and Roman army units. Alongside the reliefs on Trajan's Column in Rome, yet different in point of

artistry, the metopes of Adamclisi are important documents that call up the confrontation between the two armies. Recent research has made it possible to restore the monument which, just like in ancient times, is highly impressive through its dimensions and its expressive sculptures.

In close association with ceramics, precious metals and bronze were used by craftsmen to produce valuable works of art: bronze statuettes and appliqué, gold and silver jewelry, a large variety of vessels. In Moldavia, where the tribes of Carps had managed to remain free, pottery fashioned on the rapid wheel preserved its harmony and expressiveness of proportions, surfaces being carefully and skilfully finished, and the colour — a metallic black — showing the craftsmen's perfect command of the baking technique.

Archaeology demonstrates that the decision made by Emperor Aurelian to withdraw the Roman administrative bodies from Dacia south of the Danube in A.D. 271 was by far less important than ancient historiography maintained. The withdrawal, under the pressure of the early migrating peoples, of both the civil administration and the military garrisons, was not tantamount to abandoning a vast and rich territory, for the population went on living in its settlements producing the wares the Empire needed. Even in the absence of an actual reign, the Empire was still in control of the territory north of the Danube, and trade exchanges were frequent enough, proof thereof being the numerous money hoards unearthed south and north of the Carpathians. The interest of the Empire in the Danube valley and in the control of the whole area materialized during the reign of Diocletian (A.D. 284 — 305) as castra and fortresses were rebuilt in Dobrudja. As a matter of fact Dobrudja being still a Roman possession, it made a sort of platform from which the Latin material and spiritual culture spread over the Carpatho-Danubian area.

Under the conditions, the cultural and ethnic Romanisation was to continue in Dacia. It was seconded then by the powerful influence exerted by the free Dacians or Carps (who penetrated from Moldavia into Transylvania). Their impact upon the art developing in this area was extremely important. Only a few decades after Aurelian's withdrawal, Emperor Constantine I started a particularly active policy in the Danube area. He strengthened the defensive system in Dobrudja, and reconstructed the cities of Tropaeum Trajani and Tomi (which from then on was to be called Constantia). He crossed the Danube and brought the Danube plain, Oltenia, and possibly the Banat — a fertile region in the west of Transylvania — back under Roman rule. On the northern bank of the Danube he built the cities of Drobeta, Sucidava and Constantiniana Daphne (an important enough settlement to justify the minting of a special money issue).

However , the most important construction was the bridge spanning the banks of the Danube at Sucidava, built by Teophilus Patricius of Constantinople. Inaugurated in 328 July 5 in the presence of the emperor, this was the amplest work of its kind in ancient times, outshining the bridge built by Apolodorus of Damascus at Drobeta. It makes a relevant proof that the relations between the Empire and Dacia had been resumed. The Roman cultural and artistic impact was to become ever stronger especially after the year 330, when the Eastern Roman Empire set up its capital in Constantinople. And this despite the fact that the Dacian territory was several times devastated by the migrating peoples.

In the 4th century, the Roman artistic forms blended with the traditional autochthonous ones, including both the Dacian and the already existing Roman funds. Moreover, one should not overlook the contribution of the migrating

peoples either, as they had already assimilated Oriental, Hellenistic and Roman influences. The spread of the new architectural and inconographic programmes of Christianity, which Constantine had recognized as the official religion of the Empire, should also be considered. It is quite probable that the oldest Christian basilicas date from the 4th century A.D. They were discovered at Tomi, Tropaeum Trajani, Histria, Callatis and in several settlements north of the Danube, in Oltenia especially.

The very large basilica of Tomi — possibly the cathedral of the bishopric of Scythia Minor — was paved with a special kind of brick, its walls were faced in marble and it was decorated with mural paintings. The better preserved painting in the crypt of another basilica in Tomi, clearly shows geometric and vegetal, often symbolic motifs (ivy and vine stalks). The public edifice of the port of Tomi must have been monumental indeed. A vast mosaic pavement with geometric and floral motifs has been preserved here, one of the most representative Roman works of art in the 4th century.

The numerous hoards of Roman coins unearthed all over the country attest the flourishing of trade relations with the Empire. Christian works of art such as gems, bronze rushlights, symbolic insignia also spread throughout the territory. A "donarium" was found at Biertan in the south of Transylvania; it consists of a bronze disc with the monogramatic cross of Jesus Christ engraved on it, from which hangs a small plaque, also made of bronze, bearing the following inscription: *Ego Zenovius votum posui* (I Zenovius have contributed the offering).

The basilica with three naves at Niculițel (in the north of Dobrudja) is dated back to the 4th century as well. Of this monumental edifice only the crypt made of brick has been preserved, a *martyrion* entombing the remnants of four victims of the persecution of the Christians by Emperor Licinius in A.D. 319—322.

The art of the migrating peoples on the territory of ancient Dacia in the 4th century is illustrated by a few treasures which had been buried hastily in the face of dangers threatening the invaders themselves. Thus the treasure known under the name of *The Golden Hen and its Brood* is, undoubtedly, the most outstanding work of orfèvrerie dating from the migrations period on the Romanian territory. It was discovered at Pietroasele in northeastern Wallahia and attributed to the Visigoth chieftain Athanaris. Only twelve of the twenty-two initially discovered pieces have survived. The treasure contains several gold vessels of which the most important are a goblet (*patera*) used for ritual libations, two polygonal vessels, a big *fibula* and a broad necklace. In working out the precious metal various procedures were employed, such as hammering, engraving, fretting, and the cloisonné technique for adorning the pieces with gems. The anthropomorphous and zoomorphic decoration elements reveal an eclectic art with various traits assimilated from the vast area of Roman and Oriental culture, modelled with an obvious concern for a rich ornamentation.

The 5th and 6th centuries were an epoch of growing development of Roman architecture and art on the lower reaches of the Danube, which stimulated the artistic activity all over ancient Dacia, despite the continuous movement of the migrating peoples. During the reign of Anastasius I (431—518) and especially of Justinian (527—565) all the fortified settlements in Dobrudja and on the bank of the Danube were rebuilt and enlarged. On this occasion many new imposing edifices were erected, such as the marble basilica at Tropaeum Trajani, and the ones of Dinogetia, Noviodunum or Troesmis.

The basilica "of Syrian type" at Callatis was built with an inner court surrounded by columns, on its southern side. The basilica of Tropaeum Trajani, with its apse and crypt, had a more complex plan.

At Histria, archaeological research has brought to light an entire Roman-Byzantine district, the so-called *Domus* which in the 5th and 6th centuries included numerous one-storeyed buildings, some of them having their own private chapels . The basilicas discovered so far more than thirty, dating from the period of the restauration of the Roman Empire in the Danube valley, together with the fortifications and the rich art treasures found all over the territory of this country, demonstrate that relationships with the Roman world were never completely severed.

Monumental and funerary sculpture was a widespread art at the time. Several capitals from a Christian basilica have been discovered at Callatis, one of them of a remarkable artistic value. Decorated with acanthus leaves, ram heads and images of the dove, the capital discovered at Callatis belongs to the widespread Theodosian type, originating in the Constantinople sculpture. Other capitals typical of the early Byzantine style with Ionic elements and symbolic Christian motifs were discovered at Callatis, Histria and particularly at Tomi.

The art of metalwork is represented by jewelry, rushlights, bronze lamps, and censers discovered both in Dobrudja, in the south of Wallachia and in Transylvania. A large gold disc or pectoral with a refined decoration also comprising symbolic Christian elements was unearthed at Someşeni (Cluj county, in the north of Transylvania). The pectoral comes from a Gepidae treasure and illustrates the diffusion of the Roman-Byzantine art of metalwork into the territory of ancient Dacia, among the migrating peoples. The large number of grit or marl moulds used for casting standardized ornaments demonstrates both the density of the autochthonous population (which did not leave their settlements during the great Germanic and Asian migrations) and the fact that they continued to practice the traditional crafts.

During the 5th-6th centuries the art of ceramics is attested by the production of vessels of various kinds and by the very large number of rushlights, most of them decorated with Christian symbols. They were discovered not only in Dobrudja and along the Danube, but also in Transylvania, the Banat and Crişana, in Oltenia, northern Wallachia and Moldavia, and they make clear evidence of the continuity of the autochthonous population all over the country.

Early in the 7th century dramatic events took place on the Lower Danube ; they were to change the relations between the South-East European peoples. In 602 A.D., following the uprising headed by Focas (a centurion who was to proclaim himself emperor), the frontier on the Danube collapsed, thus opening the country to a massive penetration of the Slav tribes. Emperor Heraclius (610—641) substituted Greek for Latin as the official language of the state thereby inaugurating Byzantine history in the proper sense of the word.

The settlement of the Bulgarians in the Balkan Peninsula by the end of the 7th century did not interrupt the ties of Byzantium with the cities situated in Dobrudja along shores of the Black Sea and on the Lower Danube. Defended by strong walls, easy of access by water they continued their traditional activities, though under more difficult conditions. Through these cities Byzantine culture continued to spread under various forms to the inland regions of ancient Dacia as well.

Besides the Byzantine *orfèvrerie*, mention should be made of the treasures of the nomadic peoples discovered in the territory of Romania. The most significant are those belonging to the Gepidae; they comprise ornaments characterized by an abundant use of precious stones and by animal motifs taken over from the art of the Middle East. Silver vessels decorated with reliefs executed in repoussé representing scenes from Greek and Roman mythology were discovered at Concești, on the Prut river in northern Moldavia. They come from a Byzantine workshop, maybe from a northern Pontic city in Dobrudja or even from a place further to the north, from the area of contact between the Byzantine culture and the cultures of the Oriental and steppe peoples. Often both Byzantine and Gepidae objects were unearthed at the same sites. Such is the case of Apahida where a jug decorated with Greco-Roman mythological motifs and several ornaments characteristic of the Gepidae were unearthed from the same layer.

Of the other migrating peoples, only the Avars and the Slavs left traces of specific culture. The former left neither small settlements nor fortified fortresses, the only material evidence of their passage being the horsemen tombs. The most significant pieces of their funerary inventory are the harness ornaments, the appliqué ornaments decorated with stylized animals, buttons and small plaques. By and large, the art of the Avars — after they settled down in Europe — developed under the influence of Byzantium, although it also bears the imprint of Central Asia, which allows for the argument of a specific metalwork of the steppe horsemeu.

In the 4th century, the art of the nomadic tribes in this territory is almost exclusively illustrated by some hastily buried hoards at times of danger for the invaders themselves. The hoard known as *The Golden Hen and Its Brood*, discovered at Pietroasele, Buzău county, and attributed to Athanaric, a Visigoth chieftain, is undoubtedly the most representative treasure-trove pertaining to that period that was found in the territory of Romania. When it was found, the hoard consisted of 22 pieces (of which 12 only have been preserved). The most important pieces include a patera, a large fibula, two polygonal vases and a necklace. The precious metal was worked by various methods: hammering, fretwork, engraving, and decorated with gems in the cloisonné technique. The anthropomorphic and zoomorphic elements used in the decoration of those gold objects indicate an eclectic art with various suggestions from a vast cultural space (Roman, Oriental, etc.), designed with an obsessive concern for lavishness and rich ornamentation peculiar to the taste of that Visigoth chieftain.

The hoard of the Gepidae found at Șimleu Silvaniei, in North-Western Transylvania, including bracelets, fibulae and medallions, and also gold goblets adorned with precious stones, testifies, above all, to the links with the Roman-Byzantine world; several medallions are made from Imperial coins of the fourth century, making even more obvious that ornamental pieces were designed to suit the tastes of the barbarian artistic preference, characterized by the use of precious stones affixed in the cloisonné technique and by animal motifs, some of them borrowed from the Middle Eastern art. Unlike them, the silver objects found at Concești, on the River Prut, in Northern Moldavia, decorated with reliefs and executed by hammering, with embossed scenes from the Greek and Roman mythology, certainly originated in a Byzantine workshop, possibly in a North-Pontic city, where Byzantine influences were blended with the art of the steppes and of the Orient. The same stands valid in the case of the goblet found at Apahida, Cluj county, and the vessels found at

Tăuteni, Western Transylvania, all of amphora type, decorated with mythological motifs that had an extensive circulation in the Roman-Byzantine world. On the contrary, the harness plates and rosettes and the breast pieces or clasps found in another treasure-trove at Apahida can be considered, in view of their ornamentation and execution, as being characteristic for the craft of Germanic merchants, Gepidae in this particular case. The most remarkable are the fine bird-like breast pieces decorated in cloisonné technique with semi-precious stones (almandines) and green glass.

The Slav settlements were not fortified consisting of pithouses with a scanty inventory; the pottery was very simple indeed, hand-made or worked on the primitive wheel. The only interesting pieces are the fibulae and the bronze appliqué objects discovered in a few necropolises in Transylvania mainly.

Neither could the artistic horizon of the autochthonous population be as broad as it had been in the epoch preceding the migrations. However, evidence of a significant continuity have been recently discovered by archaeologists in settlements dating from the 6th and 7th centuries; more often than not one suggestions of the traditional forms and decoration are to be found on the art objects of this period, yet processed clumsily enough. Nevertheless ceramics evincing a great variety of forms was discovered at Moreşti, Cipău and Porumbenii Mari, villages situated in the east of Transylvania. Weights used for looms were also found, which points to the existence of the production of fabrics made both of wool and of vegetal fibres. The local craftsmen (the workshop of a silversmith was discovered at Moreşti) made ornaments such as ear-rings, fibulae or buckles.

Future archaeological research is sure to complete the image of this epoch of which, under the circumstances, we still know little enough. However, the first conclusion we can draw is that the population of Dacia went on living on the territory from which the Roman legions had withdrawn. And although artistic creation seldom reached the excellence of the preceding epoch it still adopted the same models in point of style, preserving their basic characteristics of form and ornament, thus securing the consolidation of tradition even under such unfavourable conditions.

Romanian Mediaeval Arts

The *Dridu* ceramics clearly demonstrates the continuity of the Romanian people in the territory of Dacia. The *Dridu* ceramics, characteristic of the 10th and 11th centuries, was first discovered in Wallachia, in the village of the same name. Subsequently it was also found at various sites in Transylvania and in the northeast of Moldavia. By and large Dridu ceramics has preserved the important elements of the Roman ceramics which to this day can be found in the Romanian folk ceramics. Its spread over a wide area demonstrates the existence of a common cultural stock as well as of active trade relations between the developing Romanians state formations of the time.

The most characteristic phenomenon at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century was the construction of residential citadels, a fact which proves the foundation of autochthonous state formations. Menomorut,

the voivode of Crișana, possessed such citadels close to the present western and northwestern frontiers of Romania. Gelu, whose principality covered all the basin of Someșu Mic river in the centre of Transylvania, had his citadels at Mănăștur and at Dăbîca, both near Cluj. At least four citadels were identified in the Banat in the southwestern territory of Romania. The citadel of Cenad (Urbs Morisena) was probably voivode Glad's capital. A fortress was built at Făgăraș in the south of Transylvania, at the foot of the Carpathians; it was surrounded by a strong earthen wall and a moat, and was provided with a stockade made of thick wooden beams. It also had a necropolis dating from the 9th-10th centuries from which several ornaments have been unearthed attesting the links of the local population with the Byzantine world.

A fortress of the same period was discovered in Wallachia at Slon (near the river Teleajen, in Prahova county), while an inscription dating from A.D. 943 and bearing the name of Dimitrie, in all probability a local chieftain, was found in the village of Mircea Vodă, in Dobrudja.

Not far from Gelu's citadel of Dăbîca archaeological excavations have brought to light the remnants of a brick church whose plan and fragments of painting prove to have been of the Byzantine rite. We do not know the date when the two monasteries of Urbs Morisena were built; we only know that they existed till the early 9th century. However, a rich treasure discovered in the same region, at Sînnicolau Mare, offers a clear image of the artistic relationships at the end of the first millennium. Consisting of twenty-three pure gold vessels, the treasure illustrates the complex artistic influences characteristic of Eastern Europe in the 9th-10th centuries, when Byzantium was caught between the pressure of the Arabs to the East and that of the migrating peoples, to the North. Decorated by hammering and engraving, the vessels of Sînnicolau Mare possess a particularly varied ornamentation in which Iranian motifs — fantastic animals, fighters on horseback, eagles — are prevalent. Yet Christian symbols are also present. The most valid hypothesis regarding the origin of this treasure is that its objects were worked out by a goldsmith who had learnt his craft in the Byzantine-Arab milieu, under the influence of the Abassid court of Baghdad. There is no evidence of a Magyar or proto-Bulgarian rule in the Banat during the 10th century — as it was wrongly speculated — so that the treasure may have been made for one of the autochthonous leaders.

This intricate context of complex cultural relationships goes to explain the church in the shape of a *rotunda* in Alba Iulia, center of Transylvania. Dating from the 10th century, the building in Alba Iulia belongs to a category widely spread in Central Europe which brought together Byzantine and Carolingian models. Other religious buildings attest even more clearly the predominance of the Byzantine models in this ancient Romanian world whose relationships with Byzantium as successor to the Roman Empire, were not due to the cult only but also to deep-rooted historical local traditions.

Starting with the last decades of the 10th century, the relations in the field of art with Byzantium were intensely reactivated, following the victories of the imperial armies in the Balkan Peninsula. In A.D. 971, after having crushed the resistance of Eastern Bulgaria, Emperor John Tzimiskes re-stationed Byzantine garrisons along the Danube and founded a frontier province, the so-called "thema" of Parhistrion, its capital at Silistra. Almost fifty years later, Basil II the Bulgarochtonos conquered the western part of the Bulgarian Czardom (A.D. 1018) and strengthened the Byzantine domination all along the lower reaches of the Danube. The military and political organization

of the country was followed by the religious one: we learn of the existence of an archpriestship in the Banat, which proves that the number of churches called for the creation of such an ecclesiastical rank.

In Dobrudja, which was under the Byzantine rule, the old citadels were rebuilt by using the walls of the Roman fortresses entirely sometimes. Particularly imposing was the new citadel at *Păcuiul lui Soare*, a small island on the Danube down-stream of the present town of Călărași. At the same time churches were erected such as the small basilica at Dinogetia, probably the chapel of a cemetery; it was built in the Byzantine technique by alternating rows of stone and brick. Its interior was painted *in fresco secco* as the small fragments preserved reveal.

In the centre of Dobrudja, at Basarabi-Murfatlar, a cave monastic complex was discovered, dating — as a grafitto attests it — from A.D. 922. Active in the 10th—12th centuries, the complex of Basarabi consists of a main church of basilica type with three naves; another church with only one nave divided into the nave proper and the narthex, like with all Greek-Orthodox churches; two chapels; six adjoining rooms (annexes); and finally several galleries and funeral rooms. The ornamentation of these constructions (dug into a chalk hill) is extremely scanty; moreover, few as they are, the motives scratched on the walls do not follow a coherent pattern. Traces of colour appear in places (earth red), yet they do not form a painted decoration. Greek, Runic, Glagolitic and Cyrillic inscriptions are scribbled all over the place. The origin of the monastic complex of Basarabi is still controversial; yet its isolation can be accounted for only if we accept the hypothesis that it belonged to a congregation resisting the official church.

Meanwhile, north of the Carpathians historical developments occurred which were to be of great consequence for the field of art. The instauration of the Magyar rule in Pannonia and King Arpad's attempts to bring the Romanian principalities under his rule, increased the efforts of the autochthonous state formations to defend themselves. Ahtum, for instance, the voivode of the Banat, was able to put up a strong resistance in the fortifications of Urbs Morisena against forces undoubtedly superior in number. Although little research was carried out at the fortresses built on the mountain ridges around Sibiu — Răşinari, Tilişca, Orlat, Săsciori, Jina, Sibiel and Săliște — they seem to have been erected before the Saxons' colonisation. By extension they gave the German name of Siebenbürgen (Seven Fortresses) to the whole of Transylvania. The earliest Magyar edifices on the territory of Transylvania were erected by King Ladislaus towards the end of the 11th century: a church in Oradea (where the king himself was buried), a Romanesque church of the recently founded bishopric of Alba Iulia, and another church at Siniob (in the west of Transylvania) built of wood, a traditional material used for local buildings.

At the beginning of the 12th century, the Byzantine cities on the Danube were powerful centres where handicraft wares were produced. Ceramics came first; pottery designed for domestic use was red and decorated with wavy lines, grey and polished with a stone or glased and decorated with striations. The ceramics used for ceremonial occasions is fluted or striated while the glaze is green, yellow and white. An unglazed pitcher discovered at Capidava (a citadel situated on the bank of the Danube in the west of Dobrudja) is particularly important as one can read on it the name of *Petru* — a specifically Romanian name.

The processing of precious metals was still very important at the time. Ornaments of Byzantine inspiration were manufactured in various regions of the territory. The pectoral crosses — simple or double — discovered in many parts of the country deserve to be mentioned. The most significant piece of *orfèvrerie* of the time is the reliquary-cross unearthed at Dinogetia (a city where other gilt silver jewels, rings, earrings, bracelets were discovered); this piece is worked in the techique of the embossed metal with appliqué filigree and semi-precious stones (sapphires and opals).

However, by and large the 12th century offers but a frail image in point of artistic creations. Archaeological finds are yet scanty so that reconstitutions are mostly based on documentary evidence. Confronted with the Byzantine and the Magyar expansionism and bearing the brunt of the Petchenegs' and of the Cumans' invasions, the Romanian state formations were still able to assert themselves. Thus, for example, early in the 12th century Anna Comnena, daughter of Emperor Alexis Comnenus, wrote about the local chieftains Tatos, Satza and Seslav at the Lower Danube. One of their contemporaries, a chieftain in the valley of the river Streiu, in the south of Transylvania, was building his residence and a palace chapel there.

The church of Streisîngeorgiu was built on a very simple plan consisting of a rectangular nave and an altar. Some architectural details evince the influence of the Romanesque style known in Transylvania since around A.D. 1100. The church of Streisîngeorgiu is the oldest mediaeval monument preserved in this country, witnessing conditions much more complex than those the few documents of the times record. That the number of Greek-Orthodox churches and monasteries was large enough, is to be inferred from several letters Pope Innocent III wrote during 1204—1205, in which the Catholic pontiff expressed his concern in this respect.

Cave monasteries existed at Vărădia (in the Banat) and Bucium (in the west of Transylvania). Smaller churches in the Buzău Mountains in the north of Wallachia, belonged to the same category. Meanwhile, in Transylvania, the Hungarian kings supported the Catholic monastic orders and built Benedictine monasteries at Oradea and Cluj; in 1179 a Cistercian monastery was founded at Igriș, in the Banat. It was through those Catholic institutions that the forms of Romanesque architecture penetrated deeper into Transylvania; however, they were to enjoy wider spread only during the following century. The relief of *Majestas Domini* of the first Roman-Catholic cathedral in Alba Iulia, is a valuable evidence of the penetration of early Romanesque sculpture in Transylvania. Its schematic yet expressive manner of execution was widely spread in Europe towards the end of the 11th and during the first quarter of the 12th centuries.

The Saxon colonists who had settled in Transylvania during the reign of King Gheza II (1141—1161) also contributed to the dissemination of Romanesque architecture and its variants. Natives of the Rhine and the Moselle valleys, they settled down in the south and west of Transylvania to form outposts of the Hungarian rule and to develop the trades.

Towards the end of the 12th century an increasing number of new fortifications was built while the old ones were consolidated. One of the oldest fortresses we know of today was built by the Romanians at Bîtca Doamnei in the west of Moldavia on the precincts of an old Dacian citadel. Archaeological sources have attested the fact that the inhabitants of the citadel entertained relations both with the Hungarian kingdom and with the Byzantine world. The pieces of *orfèvrerie* discovered here faithfully copied Byzantine

Balkan models. The techniques employed — engraving on a simplified drawing — is characteristic of the precious metal ornaments unearthed at other sites in Moldavia, and dated to the end of the 12th century.

The Teutonic knights, coming to Transylvania as royal guests at the invitation of King Andrew II, glave a powerful impulse to the construction of citadels. In 1211 the king offered them land in the southeast of Transylvania around today's city of Braşov. The donation certificate mentioned the existence of several older fortresses. It also specified that the knights were not allowed to build stone fortresses but only wooden ones. The Teutone, however, infringed the convention and raised several stone citadels fortified with towers. In several cases, within the precincts they built chapels, very simple as a rule. Because of this infringement, the Teutons were driven away by King Andrew in 1225.

During the early decades of the 13th century, the Genoese — having become masters of the navigation routes in the Black Sea after the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders — built the fortresses of Enisala, in Dobrudja, and Cetatea Albă (which they called Moncastro) on the seashore, where the river Dniester (today in the Ukrainian SSR) flows into the Black Sea. The fortress of Enisala had several residential pavilions whose interiors must have been decorated richly enough as the fragments of ceramic tiles infer. The fortress of Cetatea Albă resembles, in general, the Byzantine citadels, which may prove that it was raised on the foundations of an older construction.

The fortresses built by the native chieftains have a powerful defensive character. Such are the ones at Curtea de Argeş, in the north of Wallachia, and the defensive system of the passes along some river valleys on the southern slopes of the Carpathians. New defensive works are mentioned at Bitca Doamnei, in Moldavia, which allows for the assumption that the fortress was the residence of a local leader who must have ruled for quite a long time.

The same period witnessed the appearance of two other categories of buildings: the tower-houses, designed for defence, and the retreat-citadels, built by villagers for shelter in times of need. Very often indeed, the villagers fortified their churches as well. Defensive works of this kind assumed such proportions that in 1298 the king decided to put a stop to the construction of peasant fortresses. Although their ornamentation was scanty enough, the village fortresses were harmoniously integrated into the natural scenery, while their proportions and the organization of volumes were quite expressive.

The places of worships illustrate both the traditional relationships with the Byzantine world and the adoption of new styles of architecture coming from the West, Romanesque at first, Gothic during the following period. The early decades of the 13th century saw the building of a palace chapel at the voivodal seat of Curtea de Argeş. Its plan — in the form of an inscribed cross with one nave and a narthex — belonged to the Byzantine typology. It was discovered under the floor of St. Nicholas' princely church, erected n the 14th century. The edifice had been decorated with enamelled ceramic discs, ornaments often used in the Byzantine area, and with mural paintings as well. The fragments of painting discovered at the ruins of another church of the same period not far from Curtea de Argeş, in the village of Cetăţeni, demonstrate that, as early as the first half of the 13th century, in the principalities south of the Carpathians economic and political conditions were ripe for the construction of important edifices. The high grade pigments used hereby and the careful preparation of the ground point to the fact that the paintings could only have been achieved by highly skilled master painters.

The same applies to St. Athanasius' church in Niculițel, in the north of Dobrudja. Built in the shape of an inscribed cross and having a steeple as well, the church was in fact a palace chapel. The tall arcades decorating the walls on the outside are ornamental elements which were to become widespread with Romanian architecture in the 14th—15th centuries.

Romanesque architecture is prevailingly illustrated in the south of Transylvania by a peculiar type of stone basilica with three naves, whose model was brought over from the Rhine valley by the Saxon colonists. Such are the churches built at Cisnădioara, Cisnădie and Chipăr. In the northwestern parts of Transylvania, the churches were built of brick with two steeples topping the western façade. Fine illustrations of the kind are the churches in the villages of Herina and Aciș.

The most important Romanesque monument in Transylvania is the Roman-Catholic cathedral of Alba Iulia, rising on the site of the old cathedral destroyed during the Tartar invasion. As successive teams of master builders worked on the site from 1274 to 1291 — a period when the Late Romanesque was being superseded by a new style, the Early Gothic —, the edifice evinces numerous transitional forms.

The spread of the Early Gothic was due mainly to the Cistercian monks, who, shortly after the Tartar invasion, had been asked to come and restore the monastery of Cîrța (in the Făgăraș Land, southern Transylvania). A vast architectural ensemble consisting of a church, various annexes and enclosing walls, was to be damaged by the Ottoman invasions in the 15th century as well. In keeping with the requirements of the Cistercian building system, the church was a basilica with a transept and two rectangular chapels on the eastern side and had no towers. The decoration consists of capitals adorned with crockets, while the windows of the upper register are circular and polylobate. The sanctuary is not rectangular — again in keeping with Cistercian rules — but polygonal, evincing the strong influence of a more developed Gothic style which in the 13th century, had already asserted itself, many of the churches in Europe at the time being built in the new style. On the southern side of the ensemble stand the main annexes of the monastery, the refectory and the dormitories of the monks. Although in ruins today, the construction arrests our attention owing to the skilfully hewn stone blocks and to their perfect proportions, which make of this monument one of the most significant architectural works of the period within this cultural area.

While all these complex stylistic confrontations were at work, in certain Romanian villages princely foundations were erected as influenced by various trends which, in most cases, combined into local syntheses. Thus at Gura Sada the Greek-Orthodox church was built to resemble an archaic rectangle crowned by a tower, while at Mânăstirea and Voievozi Romanesque plans were preferred as consisting of one nave and a semicircular apse.

The church of Densus, in the south of Transylvania, is definitely one of the most significant mediaeval monuments in Romania. The materials it is built of come from the ruins of the nearby Ulpia Trajana. The spatial conception is Byzantine, although the structure proper and the decorative elements are Romanesque. The exterior of the edifice is powerfully marked by the use of stone facing — a Romanesque feature again — and by ancient sculptural elements which cover the whole building creating a highly expressive free composition.

Towards the end of the 13th century, forms of the early Gothic style appeared in the principalities of southern Transylvania. Thus the churches in the villages of Sîntă Măria Orlea and Strei are hall-churches with rectangular sanctuaries, bell-towers and expressive contours.

Built in times of great distress, when the territory of Romania was frequently harassed by ravaging invasions, the churches erected in the 13th century are austere and possess few ornaments. The richest ornaments are to be found at the cathedral in Alba Iulia. The first to be noted is the southern porch — typically Romanesque in form and decoration — whose colums and arches are decorated with meandering stems and palmettes. Two reliefs portray *Archangel Michael Killing the Dragon*. In one of them the archangel is shown in a rather meditative attitude; his hair and his clothes recall older Romanesque models but the vigorous forms betray the transition to the Gothic. Other reliefs feature the same transitional phase.

Mural painting in the 13th century must have been confined to a restricted area. In contrast to it, the art of metalwork held an important place in those times being illustrated not only by pieces imported from the Byzantine or Western world but also by numerous objects made by the local workshops. The production of weapons was large enough as inferred by the deposits discovered in the south of Transylvania mainly. The art of precious metals is attested mainly by the finds in necropolises, of which the most important are women's ornaments. Of a great variety and revealing a high degree of excellence, such ornaments are to be found in the archaeological deposits all over the country. Created under the influence of the Byzantine world, some of them came from local workshops which were closely linked with the Byzantine South.

In Transylvania cult objects are predominant. Made of bronze, they are figural in shape: the ritual vessels discovered at Șelimbăr and Boarta (in the south of Transylvania) portray men heads, while the one unearthed at Chișineu (in the west of Transylvania) represents a horseman.

The 14th century can be termed "the epoch of artistic assimilations and syntheses." Despite inherent vicissitudes, that century was particularly favourable to the Romanian Lands, as the political situation in South-Eastern Europe allowed for their powerful assertion. The decline of the Tartar Khanate in the Crimea and the temporary weakening of the Magyar kingdom following the extinction of the Arpadian dynasty, helped the Romanian Lands free themselves from the influence of hegemonic powers. After a long period of evolution, in the 14th century it became possible, for the voivodates south of the Carpathians to unite into an independent state known from then on under the name of Wallachia.

East of the Carpathians, a similar process was under way in 1359, when Prince Bogdan I of Maramureș (a province in the north of Transylvania) abolished the vassalage to the Magyar King Louis I and founded Moldavia. On the other hand, even in the territories under the direct suzerainty of the Hungarian kingdom, i.e. in Maramureș, Crișana, the Banat and in Transylvania, the Romanian principalities were able to impose themselves in the political and military fields and obtain certain privileges propitious for the development of an independent cultural life. Owing to an obvious economic progress, numerous villages situated in the areas colonized by the Saxons managed to reach an urban stage of development as their thriving was stimulated by the organization of guilds and the extension of trade relations.

All over the territory the economic flourishing and the urbanization of villages resulted, on the artistic plane, in the renewal of traditional forms and the development of construction and ornament. At Curtea de Argeș, the capital of Wallachia, at Suceava, the capital of Moldavia, and at the main residence courts of the noblemen in Transylvania ceremonial art required suitable means of expression. The adoption of elements coming from abroad went hand in hand with an endless search for local solutions able to satisfy the pretentious autochthonous social milieu of very strong traditions. The local master continued to take over their models from the Byzantine world and from the Catholic West which was at the time under the double influence of the Late Gothic and the Early Italian Renaissance.

The same as in the previous century, the main building sites were those of the fortified residences and military citadels. A large number of *towerhouses* were built, particularly for the Romanian aristocracy. Massive towers with strong stone walls were erected in Maramureș, Hunedoara and south of the Carpathians, near Curtea de Argeș. More often than not there were also simple wooden dwelling houses in the vicinity of the towers, the latter being used mainly in times of danger.

Although in ruins, the princely court seats of Curtea de Argeș, Cîmpulung and Tîrgoviște can still be seen to have shared a common feature: they all covered a very wide surface surrounded by stone walls which sheltered stone houses comprising a high cellar and a groundfloor. The houses were also provided with large verandahs supported by wooden pillars, an element taken over from folk architecture which was to enjoy wide popularity with Romanian architecture, both in villages and cities.

The old voivodal seats of Siret and Suceava were soon outshined by the ample residential citadels erected during the reign of Petru Mușat (1374—1386) who achieved the full consolidation of the principality of Moldavia. The same prince built the massive fortresses at Neamț, Crăciuna and Țețina where the building technique reveals Baltic influences; the fact easily accounted for by the friendly relationships between Moldavia and the Great Principality of Lithuania.

Consistent efforts to strengthen the frontiers of the country can be noticed in Wallachia as well. Thus, citadels were built especially along the Danube where the Ottomans were becoming an ever greater danger. Mircea the Old (1386—1418), who defeated Sultan Bayazid, built the citadels of Turnu Măgurele and Giurgiu. Made of carefully faced stone blocks, and large-sized bricks, the citadel of Giurgiu seems to have been an imposing place of residence as well, proof thereof being the rich ceramic material discovered by archaeologists in recent years. Grafitto decorations, green and yellow enamels on white alip, clearly show the link with Byzantine ceramics. The defence fortresses built by Mircea the Old at Turnu Severin and Brăila, both on the Danube, have not yet been studied thoroughly; the same applies to the fortifications the same prince initiated in Dobrudja at Enisala, Isaccea and Caliacra. To the north, the main citadel restored by Mircea was Rucăr which controlled the road connecting Wallachia and Transylvania, from Cîmpulung to Brașov.

In the second half of the 14th century, the Saxon colonists of Sibiu built the frontier citadel of Tălmaciu (today in ruins), while the inhabitants of Brașov erected the castle of Bran, mentioned in the documents of 1377. Bran is a typical mountain castle, a fortress skilfully adapted to the terrain, with the steep slopes increasing its defensive power. The castle is provided

with several defensive towers to control the same important road connecting Cîmpulung and Braşov, on which the citadel of Rucăr was built in Wallachia. Very much altered by successive restorations, the castle of Bran still preserves a few original Gothic window frames and architectural elements — the ones of the donjon especially. The donjon originating in the architecture of the North Italian aristocracy, must have reached Transylvania through Bohemia. The castle of Bran, which became the property of Mircea the Old, the princes of Wallachia (who in the meantime had established a fief in the southeastern parts of Transylvania as well), is the finest 14th century specimen of fortified residential architecture preserved on the Romanian territory.

A large number of places of worship were also erected during the Middle Ages. Document and archeaological research prove that most of the edifices of this kind erected at the time were made of wood. After the independent Romanian states were founded in Transylvania and the Banat, as asserted themselves in the military and political fields, an ever larger number of stone buildings were built, with the particular aim of setting off the authority of the voivode. Basarab I is the founder of at least two of the most important edifices of the century: St. Nicholas' Church in Curtea de Argeş and the Princely Church in Cîmpulung. The church of Sînnicoară in Curtea de Argeş must have belonged to the same period (though some research workers consider it to be older). The Princely Church in Cîmpulung had already been completed in 1352, when Basarab was buried in it. Twice destroyed by the earthquakes of 1628 and 1802, and restored each time, the old church is known only from archaeological research. It was built in the shape of an inscribed Greek cross topped by a steeple and had a narthex provided with a tribune on the western façade, recalling certain variants in Constantinople.

Very little altered in the course of time, the church of St. Nicholas in Curtea de Argeş helps us understand the important cultural role played by Wallachia in the first half of the 14th century. The architectural type of this church came from Constantinople; yet the Romanian builders interpreted it boldly, thus attesting the existence of a genuine artistic background of its own tradition in Wallachia. Dressed stone was replaced with boulders, this way enhancing the plastic quality of the entire monument. Unlike the Byzantine churches of this type, very small as a rule, the church in Curtea de Argeş is an edifice of monumental proportions.

Architectural forms of Byzantine origin are to be found with other Romanian edifices as well. We should mention Sînnicoară church in Curtea de Argeş, the old Greek-Orthodox church in Cetatea Albă, the old church of Neamţ Monastery in the west of Moldavia and, not far from it, the palace chapel at Netezi-Grumăzeşti, all of them one-nave churches consisting of a naos and a pronaos.

The changes occurring in the Greek-Orthodox ritual led to important transformations of the places of worship: a new *triconch* plan was created through the addition of lateral apses, which made the naos much wider. The oldest specimens known in Wallachia were raised during the reign of Prince Vlaicu (1364—1377); they were the result of building campaing initiated by the scholar monk Nicodim, who thoroughly reorganized monastic life in Wallachia. However, the churches Nicodim's disciples erected at Vodiţa and Tismana in northern Oltenia in keeping with the new ritual requirements, are only archaeologically attested today.

The church of the Cozia Monastery (1387—1388) founded by Mircea the Old in the north of Oltenia has very well stood the test of time. The façades of this finely proportioned edifice consist of alternating courses of brick and mortar, divided into three registers by stone mouldings. The superior register consists of blind arcades decorated with vegetal motifs. Stone rosettes were fretted in the centre of the arcades for ventilation. The window frames are decorated with vegetal motifs as well as with armorial bearings such as the bicephalous eagle pointing to the fact that the founder of the church was a Byzantine despot. It was said that the edifice was closely connected with the Serbian monuments in the Morava valley. Yet, as early as 1933, the French Byzantinologist Gabriel Millet proved that, owing to its proportions, the church of Cozia monastery belonged to the architecture of Wallachia whose permanent feature was a perfect harmony of proportions based on classicism.

Mircea the Old was also the founder of Cotmeana Monastery in the west of Wallachia, which reflects the transition from the one-nave churches to those with a triconch plan. The decoration of the façades consists of the rhythmical alternation of brick and thick layers of mortar, and of tall arches adorned with discs made of enamelled ceramics and with small ceramic crosses embedded in the mortar.

During the same period, the Moldavian Prince Petru Mușat built the Trinity Church at Siret, his capital city. The monument has a trefoiled plan without a steeple; it is built of quarried stone in the building technique peculiar to Gothic constructions. Like with the Cotmeana monastery, the façades are decorated with tall arcades between which there are discs of enamelled ceramics and small crosses. The moulding of ceramic discs as well as the enamelled bricks that surround the windows, recall ornamental solutions peculiar to the Baltic area. A double synthesis is thus achieved between the Gothic building technique and the Byzantine spatial conception in point of construction, and between the Byzantine solutions and Northern influences in that of decoration. The churches in the villages of Volovăț and Vornicenii Mari (Suceava county) were also built on a triconch plan; the latter was decorated with rich ceramic ornaments, discs and enamelled bricks.

It the western part of the country, in Transylvania, the triconch plan is splendidly represented by the church of the Hodoș-Bodrog Monastery. This Romanian monastery existed already in the 11th century; in the 14th century its former wooden constructions were replaced with stone-built ones. The façade of the church used to be covered with fresco mortar.

Simultaneously with the development of some Byzantine architectural models, an influx of Gothic elements took place in the 14th century, facilitated by the development of towns in Transylvania. The great progress of trades, the organization of guilds, the growth of commercial relations impelled the flourishing of towns, which in turn made it necessary to restore and modernize the places of worship. The campaign for building new churches was not due only to religious requirements, but also to the efforts to obtain certain economic privileges, exemptions from taxes, permission for opening of fairs. In Transylvania, the old Romanesque edifices were replaced by impressive monuments belonging to the late Gothic style.

The Evangelical Church in Sebeș (not far from Alba Iulia), of the hall type, is an ambitious achievement in point of architecture. Its lavish ornamentation in the Gothic style peculiar to the Peter Parler's workshop, is the work of excellent stone masons, some of them coming from Prague. The pillars provided with consoles and canopies for statues, the carved decoration

of friezes of vegetal volutes and fantastic animals, the keystones ornamented with floral elements, human masks and armorial bearings, all these enhance the lofty beauty of the interior, while the exterior is even more richly decorated with statues and high reliefs. The Sebeș Evangelical-Church served as a model for the parish churches in Cluj, Brașov and Sighișoara.

However, like everywhere else in Europe, the Gothic churches were built at a slow pace; only the plan, the foundations and part of the walls were erected in the 14th century, the rest was completed in the 15th century.

Nevertheless, the new style had already gained ground in the 14th century. Some of its constructive and decorative solutions were to be taken over and used with Romanian edifices. Thus the Basarab princes in Wallachia built at Rîșnov the church St. Nicholas, a small yet harmonious edifice with Gothic vaults and window frames. Gothic elements also gained ground with the monuments south and particularly east of the Carpathians. At Turnu Severin and Cîmpulung — where princess Clara, the Catholic wife of voivode Nicolae Alexandru (1352—1364) restored the church of St. Mary Monastery — one can easily discern the influence of the Gothic style.

In Moldavia, the introduction of the Gothic was more complex. Indeed, as early as the reign of Bogdan I, towards the middle of the 14th century, a stone church was erected at Rădăuți (in the north of the county) on the foundations of an older wooden church, reflecting the adaptation of the Gothic forms to the requirements of the Greek-Orthodox cult. The three-nave plan was thus completed with a transversal wall to separate the building into the two ritual compartments specific to the Orthodox cult. The vaulting system reflects the Greek-Orthodox conception of the symbolism of ecclesiastical space. However, the simple decoration of the façade, together with the general plan, constitutes a synthesis which Gheorghe Balș, an outstanding connoisseur of Romanian mediaeval architecture, emphasized some sixty years ago: it is the synthesis between the Greek-Orthodox liturgical spatial programme and the building and decorative methods of Gothic architecture. This was to be the basis for the further development of a style characteristic of the great flourishing period of architecture in Moldavia during Stephen the Great's reign, in the following century.

During the same period a large number of edifices which carried further the traditions of 13th century architecture were built in the Romanian principalities north of the Carpathians. The structure of many village churches recalls the churches of Sîntămărie Orlea or Strei; others — such as the church of Cetatea Colțului (Hunedoara county), the princely residence of the Cîndea voivodes — are provided with fortifications as part of the defensive system of residences. Special mention deserves the church of Rîmnet Monastery (Alba county) where the Romanesque plan was adapted to the Greek-Orthodox spatial programme. Thus the effort to achieve an architectural synthesis — characteristic of all the regions of the country constitutes one of the specific features of the 14th century.

Unlike architecture, sculpture — in wood or stone — held a rather modest place in the art of the epoch. The churches, built in the Byzantine style, were devoid of carved ornaments, Cozia excepted, whose stone window frames are decorated with heraldic, floral and geometric elements. As the Gothic monuments were not completed by the end of the 14th century, their only ornaments were strictly connected with the building proper — consoles, keystones and simple adornments of window frames.

The Roman-Catholic cathedral of Alba Iulia houses the tombstones of bishops Andrew (d. 1356) and Emeric (d. 1389). They are decorated with borders containing the memorial inscription and with a relief in the middle representing the deceased wearing the insignia of their position — the crosier and the mitre. The technique of the low relief reduces the plastic effect of the contours and only the folds of the vestments are more vividly treated. The tombstone in the princely church of St. Nicholas in Curtea de Argeș — attributed by some historians to Prince Vlaicu (1364—1377) and by others to Radu I (1377—1383) — belongs to the same typological category generally known as *gisants* (i.e. the deceased portrayed in a supine position). Although eroded by time, the tombstone is by far superior artistically to those mentioned before. The recumbent figure is clad in western clothes. The crown he wears shows his princely rank. The relief here clearly suggests the forms and ornamental elements of the clothes.

Unlike the funerary monuments of western influence, the tombstone of Vlaicu (1364—1377) looks like a sarcophagus its sides decorated with stylized trees. On the lid there is the tree of life crowned by a solar rosette fixed inside a twelve-pointed star. Both the inconography and its treatment show the influence of Byzantine art, which in its turn was in close connection with the Near-East, the Caucasus and Iran, the source of numerous powerfully symbolic themes.

Quite exceptional against this background of such modest sculpture are the achievements of two masters, Martin and Gheorghe of Cluj; they completed in the town of Oradea, three statues representing the kings Stephen, Emeric and Ladislaus, all of them full size and standing. They also made a spectacular equestrian statue representing King Ladislaus, which used to stand in front of the Oradea Cathedral. As they were destroyed by the Turks in 1660, these statues are known only from some very rough sketches of the time. Yet they were *the earliest monuments designed for public squares in mediaeval Europe*, coming after long centuries during which sculpture had been wholly subordinated to architecture, serving only to adorn various edifices. A statue by the same Cluj masters in Prague, representing *St. George Fighting the Dragon*, only partially makes up for the loss of the Oradea statues. Of small dimensions for it was designed to decorate a fountain, the statue — dating from 1373 — is quite surprising in the exceptional rendering of both horse and rider in motion, and particularly in the precise and elegant details which show that the two masters had been trained to become jewellers.

In contrast to sculpture, painting holds a prominent place in the art of the Romanian principalities. As was to be expected, Byzantine painting was adopted especially by the Greek-Orthodox Romanians. In 1311, an anonymous painter adorned with murals the church in the village of Sîntămăria Orlea. The images illustrate traditional themes, the southern wall being dominated by an ample representation of *The Last Judgement*. In point of style this is an art synthesis turning to good account both elements peculiar to Byzantine painting of the Paleologue epoch, and certain suggestions coming from the Italian art. Simple and clear compositions, the monumental treatment, the elegant line of drawings and the simple colouring modulated with soft harmonies of earth red, are the main features of the murals at Sîntămăria Orlea. One of the compositions narrating *The Discovery of the Holy Cross* has proved a good opportunity for the painter to portray the imperial Byzantine court with its guard of honour.

In 1313—1314, the old princely foundation of St. George in Streisingeorgiu, dating from the 12th century, was also adorned with murals. A painted inscription states that master Teofil was the author of all the murals. Today these murals are being brought to light from under layers of more recent painting. They reveal a very old inconographic vein, which only some powerful local traditions can explain, as it descends through southern Italy from the Byzantine art of Cappadocia, in Asia Minor. The concise, energetic style underlines master Teofil's artistic excelence. *The Last Judgement*, discovered on the west wall, reveals early echoes of the protest against social injustice.

The earliest ensemble of mural paintings preserved in Wallachia dates from the time of Basarab I and it can be seen in the cave-church of Corbii de Piatră village, not far from Cimpulung. Dating probably from the fourth decade of the 14th century, the paintings evince an early assimilation of artistic solutions belonging to the Byzantine-Paleologan style. The Christological cycle is illustrated by images of great beauty, while the image of Archangel Michael, surrounded by an ornamental frame made of semipalmettes, recalls the numerous similar images in the cavechurches of southern Italy.

In 1362—1366, St. Nicholas' princely church in Curtea de Argeș was adorned with mural paintings. One of the most imposing mural ensemble in the Byzantine-Paleologan style, the murals at Argeș have attracted the attention of renowned scholars like Charles Diehl, Henri Focillon, Gabriel Millet, Philip Schweinfurt, I.D. Ștefănescu and others. Both the architecture and the paintings illustrate the lofty aspirations of the princes reigning in Wallachia, their principal source of inspiration being the mosaics and frescoes decorating the Chora church in Constantinople. The paintings command attention through their rich inconography and the introduction of rare themes, difficult to render. In spite of the profound themes and of the obvious differences in the manner of each painter, the murals possess an astounding unity due primarily to the judicious distribution of scenes and to the cleverly and subtly harmonized colour scheme.

The powerful line and the capacity for suggesting the expression of faces and even feelings are obvious particularly with the group of prophets. Two large compositions — *Virgin Mary Enthroned* and *The Dormition* — both in the naos — and the Christological cycle evince the pleasure of story-telling; they are often mentioned in order to emphasize the original pictorial vision of the painters. The Hellenistic tradition is obvious in the typology of the faces, in the elegant costumes and hair styles, in certain decorative elements and in the perfect command of the art of composition expressed in a complex and lofty artistic language. The lively, graceful line, with unexpected twists, features silhouettes of a noble elegance arranged according to some dancing rhythm as it were, a characteristic feature of the paintings at Argeș.

The great value of the murals in St. Nicholas' princely church in Curtea de Argeș has been unanimously attested by researchers. At the same time it should also be considered to have influenced painters of later times: in the following centuries, the master painters often studied those murals. This goes to explain the fact that some of the inconographic solutions lasted well into the 18th century when master Radu Zugravu (Radu the Painter) was to compile a volume of models copying out hundreds of scenes from the mural ensemble at Argeș.

It was but natural that the artistic activity in Wallachia should spread as far as the Romanian principalities in Transylvania. In 1377, the church of

the Rîmeț monastery was decorated, through the good offices of archbishop Ghelasie, by master painter Mihul of Crișu Alb, as a painted inscription shows it. The inscription proves both the existence of a Romanian bishopric in Transylvania and of a genuine local school of painting, one of its representatives being Mihul of Crișu Alb. Covering an older layer of paintings (dated 1330—1340) the murals executed by Mihul were altered through numerous successive interventions along the centuries. Recent research work (including an analysis with infrared rays) and partial restoration have enabled us to discover some important inconographic and stylistic data. It is quite clear that Gothic elements were combined with the traditional Byzantine fund, a fact easily accounted for in Transylvania, where stylistic confluences were so active.

Towards the end of the 14th century, the Romanian school of painting in Transylvania completed two invaluable murals, both in the south of the province. The restoration works carried on in the church of the village of Criscior have brought to light several scenes from the Christological cycle. However, the most important composition is the votive painting, one of the oldest in Romanian art to have a precise identity. It represents voivode Bălea, mentioned in a document of 1404, and his wife Visa. The models used are obviously Byzantine. However, similarly to Rîmeț but to a higher degree, here the interpretation of the traditional canon is freer and the synthesis between Byzantine and Gothic art is quite active. The vigorous line firmly draw out the forms, while colour is just a discrete auxiliary. The same as in the church of Sîntămăria Orlea, the colour scheme is dominated by earth reds, with a few touches of brown, green and white.

The paintings adorning the church in Lesnic, founded by prince Dobre Românul mentioned in a document of 1394, are closely related to those at Criscior. The main scene is *The Last Judgement*, which covers not only the western wall but also part of the adjoining lateral walls. Sinners suffering excruciating pain are represented in Hell, while among those redeemed the painter placed the image of a soldier killed in battle, with an arrow piercing his breast. The image is no doubt an evocation of the sacrifices of Dobre Românul's family in the battles against the Turks. One can see here the powerful assertion of the historical present which, breaking the canons of traditional inconography, introduces scenes from life in ecclesiastic painting.

The paintings in the pronaos of Cozia are contemporary with those described above. Commissioned by Mircea the Old, they illustrate in twenty-four images a Byzantine *Hymn to the Holy Virgin* as well as the Menologion (the calendar). In the lower register there is an impressive procession of skeletal hermit saints, their faces suggesting with ascetic life. Although rich and never devoid of vibrant harmony, the colour scheme is rather dark, lending the whole ensemble a severe expression. The murals at Cozia introduced to the Romanian principalities symbolic themes as well as a stylistic trend which the succeeding generations of master painters were to be faithful to.

In the 14th century, several murals were executed in Transylvania. They were dominated by the Gothic style in some cases also featuring Byzantine elements. As the master painters came from Germany, Italy and other countries of Western Europe, the murals displayed a great variety of manners. Yet most of them were executed in keeping with the vision peculiar to the narrative-linear current, a popular trend especially dominant in the northern countries. They are simple, the images are prevalently graphic, while the colours are laid in flat patches. The paintings belonging to the linear-narrative Gothic style do not follow any strict programme so that it is rather difficult

to reconstitute any rules of distribution. The pleasure the painter takes in the narrative is obvious, and so is a certain freedom of expression which does not take into account the real relationships between the characters, their hierarchy being subjectively chosen.

Early influences of the Italian mural painting can be traced in the Roman-Catholic church of Ghelnița, in the east of Transylvania. Several narrative cycles are to be found here, the most successful one in the northern part of the nave: *The Legend of King Ladislaus* and ample fragments from the Christological cycle. The paintings covering the southern wall are the work of a painter closer to the linear-narrative style, which proves the simultaneous existence of the two stylistic trends.

The most valuable murals created under the influence of the Gothic linear-narative style are those in the Greek-Orthodox church of Strei (Hunedoara county). The painter — whose signature near his portrait could be read by means of an infrared lamp — is master Grozie, the author of the earliest self-portrait in Romanian art (and one of the first in Europe). In an ample representation of *The Annunciation* executed in keeping with the Byzantine canons, we also find the portrait of one of the founders, prince Petru, the son of Zaicu, whose name is mentioned in a document of the year 1377 when he was rewarded for his "faithful services." This may refer to his participation in one of the numerous campaigns undertaken by Louis of Anjou in the south of Italy, for we know that in 1377—1380 many Romanian princes of Transylvania and the Banat took part in those wars. Thus, it is quite possible that a second painter should have come to Strei from Italy bringing along stylistic forms belonging to his country where Giotto's art was predominant at the time. The simpler line of the drawing and the round shape of the forms to be encountered in many of the compositions plead for a Italianate artist as their author.

As a crowning of the stylistic trend of Italian origin, an anonymous master painted several compositions at the Protestant church in Sîntana de Mureș, of which only a few invaluable fragments have been preserved. One of them portrays St. Ann, the Virgin's mother, as a powerful protective deity; its presence in the church can be explained by the increased popularity of the cult of St. Ann, in the northern countries mainly. The prototype of the composition at Sîntana de Mureș has not been identified so far; yet it is worth stressing that this image anticipates by scores of years the ample compositions in Western painting, particularly in Flanders where the most famous work on this theme was painted by Quentin Metsys. The paintings at Sîntana outline the artistry of a master who was in perfect command of his mears of expression, an admirable drawer and colourist and, above all, a remarkable creator of female figures.

At the end of the 14th century, a second series of murals were executed in the Evangelical church in Mălâncrav (Sibiu county) following earlier ones which had been created around 1350. The new murals decorated the sanctuary arranged according to obvious Gothic canons. The stylistic variant of Gothic painting known under the name of the *international court Gothic* was used here, under the influence of miniatures highly appreciated by the French royal court and by the imperial court of Prague. Elegant, carefully drawn elongated figures, with dancing movements, a gorgeous yet decorative colour range, all these constitute the main characteristics of the murals at Mălâncrav, certain images having been compared with works by North-Italian masters.

In the meantime, several local painting centres were set up in Transylvania; the most important one was active in Cluj where the name of painter Nicolae, the father of sculptors Martin and Gheorghe was mentioned. The paintings at Vlaha (Cluj county) and at Sînpetru (Brașov county) can be attributed to some local masters. In both cases a synthesis was achieved between the traditional means of the linear-narrative Gothic and the forms of the North-Italian Gothic from which the method of chromatic modelling was taken over. The compositions are simple: there is no concern for inner perspective, or any particular interest in decorative artifices, the main goal being that of clearly expressing the message.

The art of wrought metals (*orfèvrerie*) in the 14th century illustrates to the highest degree the responsiveness of the Romanian society to the stylistic innovations it witnessed all along its evolution. Some pieces show the continuity of the artistic relations with the Byzantine South, others illustrate the amplitude of the Gothic influence. At the same time they prove the high artistic level the feudal society of the time had reached in all the Romanian principalities. Silver vessels decorated by embossing with plant motifs and fantastic animals, ornaments of every kind — bracelets, ear-rings, buckles — discovered in Wallachia and Moldavia show the refined skill of the craftsmen. Particularly eloquent in this respect are the covers of Nicodim's *Gospels*; they are decorated with scenes with many characters from the Christological cycle and with vegetal elements. Made from gilt silver by hammering and engraving, the covers attest the artistic vision of a plausibly autochthonous silversmith.

Of great importance is the contribution of the Saxon silversmiths to the creation of an art of great stylistic variety. Besides numerous cult objects showing the taste for the Gothic peculiar to the epoch, there are also ornaments made in Transylvania and commissioned by the princely courts of Curtea de Argeș and Suceava. Towards the end ot the century, silversmiths' workshops were opened in the towns of Sighișoara and Aiud, besides those already existing in Cluj, Sibiu and Brașov.

Documents also record the development of the art of bronze. Some of the bells cast in that period are still preserved in churches in Transylvania and even at Cozia and Cotmeana, in Wallachia. One of the bells at Cotmeana bears the signature of master Hanos.

The production of cult objects was incessantly growing, their perfect execution combining with the refined quality of ornaments, of Italian inspiration sometimes. The ornamentation became more complex, both in point of methods and motifs: engraving and enamelling were used as well as the application of small plaques made by casting, while the ornaments proper consisted of vegetal and geometric ornaments, armorial bearings and figures of various characters.

Rings, appliqués and other ornaments, all in the Gothic style, were discovered at Curtea de Argeș in the tombs of the princely church of St. Nicholas. The most important is *The Buckle of Argeș*, in fact a stylized rendering of the façade of a castle, with a gate tower in its centre flanked by two other towers. The delicate execution places this remarkable piece of jewelry among the most valuable oeuvres created by the European goldsmiths of the time, so that the comparison with the heraldic plaques at Aachen is entirely justified.

The censer of Tismana is an interesting synthesis between Byzantine and Gothic forms; it is the transposition in metal of a church built on a Byzan-

tine plan, decorated with Gothic ornaments. Coming in all probability from a Transylvanian workshop, the censer of Tismana is another proof of the effort to create a local artistic language, and an original synthesis.

Embroidery is illustrated by several significant pieces of which the most valuable is the *epitaphios* (pall) of Cozia (1369) which demonstrates the close links with the Byzantine world. The same southern world influenced many ceramic objects created in those times, the enamelled discs adorning the façades of edifices in Moldavia ans Wallachia, as well as the vessels used for domestic purposes discovered in the south of the territory especially. We must also mention the Gothic ceramic objects discovered through archaeological research in Cluj, Sibiu, Braşov (Transylvania), in Roman (Moldavia), in Curtea de Argeş and Cîmpulung (Wallachia). The influence of the West was more obvious in the issues of coins, in seals and armorial bearings.

The complex artistic development in the Romanian lands is brilliantly illustrated by the votive portrait of Mircea the Old gracing the church of Cozia monastery. The prince is represented as a Byzantine despot, with the imperial emblem of the bicephalous eagle painted on his garb. However, his costume —and his son's Mihail who accompanies him — is typically western. On the other hand the manner in which the two personages offer the model of the church to the Holy Mother fits into to the iconographic patterns traditional for the Balkan area. On the whole the votive painting at Cozia expresses the great effort to achieve a political and cultural balance between the Eastern and the Western worlds whose influence intermingled on the Romanian lands during the Middle Ages. The votive painting was restored early in the 15th century after the original model.

The artistic achievements of the 15th century are all the more remarkable as they appeared under very hard conditions. The century was marked by the oppressive threat of the Ottoman invasion, often accompanied by the ravaging invasions of the Tartars. To these unfavourable conditions one must add the hegemonic aspirations of the Polish and Magyar kingdoms endangering the existence of the Romanian states. Steady efforts were thus necessary in order to defend the lands; hence, the erection of numerous military citadels, in towns and villages, as well as of fortified residences and castles.

The first campaign of fortifications in the 15th century in Wallachia took place during the reign of Mircea the Old. After the defeat suffered by the western knights at Nicopole (1336), the voivode strengthened the fortresses on the bank of the Danube. He also enlarged the fortifications surrounding his princely residence in Tîrgovişte — a town situated in the centre of Wallachia, which had meanwhile become the country's capital.

In Moldavia Alexandru the Kind (1400—1432) also initiated an ample campaing to enhance the defensive capacity of the country, by raising strong citadels — like the one of Hotin (today in the Ukrainian SSR) — in the most important strategic places on the frontiers, and by consolidating many of the fortresses erected by his predecessors. Some of these works were carried out with the help of masons sent by the Grand Duke of Lithuania, which accounts for the decorations with geometrical motifs made of brick, a widespread feature with Baltic architecture. In Oltenia and the Banat the fortresses benefitted by the concerted efforts of Prince Dan II of Wallachia and of Pippo Spano, a Florentine condottiere and count of Timişoara. They cooperated in the defensive organization of the Danube line threatened by the Ottoman armies.

However, the most important building campaing was the one carried out by Stephen the Great. It had important consequences for the history of architecture. The numerous large fortresses Stephen erected during this period of time, with their thick stone walls designed to resist bombing and with their deep surrounding moats, show that the country disposed of a very large number of skilled hands. Worth noting are the Neamț citadel, Cetatea Albă (The White Citadel, today in the Ukrainian SSR), the new fortress at Roman and particularly the princely residential citadel of Suceava which resembled a Gothic castle. Besides stone fortresses, forts surrounded by earthen walls and palissades evicing a highly advanced building technique were still being erected.

Apart from military fortifications, town fortresses knew wider spread. They were characteristic especially of the Saxon settlements in Transylvania which enjoyed special privileges. The fortification of towns was achieved in several stages. The towns were surrounded by several precinct walls and also provided with watch-towers. The entire defensive system was built with the contribution of all the town guilds. In the 15th century, for instance, the Sibiu citadel had come to totalise walls 4 km long guarded by 39 towers and 4 semicircular bastions for the artillery. Three times — in 1432, 1438 and 1442 — the Turks tried in vain to conquer it.

The most beautiful town citadel in Transylvania, that has been preserved almost entirely, is the one at Sighișoara. Its walls form an ample crown on a hilltop sheltering the main monuments of the town. Square or polygonal in shape, the 14 towers, each bearing the name of one guild, have their own characteristic features. The main gateway of the town is a clock tower of great beauty. As a whole, the citadel of Sighișoara allows for a good idea of the military Gothic architecture developed in Transylvania; it outlines the subtle understanding of the harmonious relations between the masonry volumes and the natural features of the terrain.

Defensive steps were taken by the villagers as well, particularly in the Saxon settlements which enjoyed special privileges. Though few at first, the number of fortifications in the rural areas increased dramatically so that, by the end of the 15th and in the 16th centuries, Transylvania possessed the largest number of peasant fortresses and fortified churches in Europe.

During the 15th century, fortifications were also built around some monasteries in Moldavia. One of the earliest fortified monasteries was Bistrița, founded by Alexander the Kind in the west of Moldavia. Soon having been built, the Putna monastery, raised by Stephen the Great (1466), was provided with a large fortified enclosure of walls and towers. Of all the original fortifications only the Treasure Tower (1481) has been preserved, a representative edifice — for Gothic architecture of the epoch.

Very significant indeed are the constructions designed to serve both civil and military purposes. This category includes castles rising on hilltops or mountain ridges, and fortified court residences. The earliest fortified *court*-type residence — its walls sheltering the prince's place of residence, the chapel and the outhouses — was located at Tîrgoviște. Prince Mircea the Old turned it into a brilliant palace early in the 15th century. Situated on a tall terrace of the river Ialomița, the court of Tîrgoviște was first surrounded by walls made of boulders and brick, and guarded at the corners by towers, circular on the inside and polygonal on the outside. The princely quarters of monumental proportions, were built of brick over roomy cellars which made a genuine pedestal that supported the rooms and a large meeting hall. The

façade was completed by a terrace or loggia with stairs leading to the residential chambers. As compared with earlier similar buildings, such as the courts of Curtea de Argeș and Cîmpulung, the court of Tîrgoviște much more clearly points to the fact that it was designed both for residential purposes and for defensive ones.

Fortified palaces were also built in Moldavia at Hîrlău (Iași county), Piatra Neamț (Neamț county), Bacău and Iași. Archaeological research has revealed the importance of the princely residences with their palace chapels and annexes. The fragments of ornamental sculpture and ceramic tiles discovered at these site, highlight the concern for beautifully finished interiors.

Sometimes the castles served as temporary shelters or refuges, some other times they were the residences of the political leader expressing the authority of the lord of the place. It has been proved that the 15th century most of the castles were built of wood. Iancu of Hunedoara, prince of Transylvania (1441) and governor of Hungary (1446), initiated an active building campaign and started raising stone castles, the castle of Hunedoara being the first of this kind. By using as a nucleus an old royal castle, a gift he had received in 1409 from his father, the Romanian prince Voicu, Iancu of Hunedoara enlarged and modernized this construction in two successive stages: 1440—1446 and 1447—1453. The new castle was provided with ample residential quarters, with a Hall of the Knights on the groundfloor and a Diet Hall on the first floor, both showing the marked influence of the Gothic style. On the outside the Diet Hall, restored recently, is provided with a corridor with four closed balconies, a fine example of monumental art. The windows of the corridor, with their fretted decorations, reflect the Late Gothic, while the windows of the balconies already display timid echoes of the Renaissance. The chapel and some other two residential buildings erected at the extremities of the enclosure of the old castrum bear the imprint of the Gothic. Mathias Corvinus, king of Hungary, Iancu's son, added a new wing highly influenced by the Italian Renaissance, which from then on was to be more and more powerful in the architecture of Transylvania.

Iancu of Hunedoara also built the castle of Șoimuș (Arad county), on the site of an old fortress first mentioned in 1278. The castle became an imposing Gothic edifice fortified by 16 towers. The seigniorial quarters — with a Hall of the Knights and a chapel — bears the stamp of the Gothic architecture of the time. There are other castles and citadels — such as Deva, Șiria, Timișoara — where Iancu's inclination for the stylistic forms of Gothic architecture are quite obvious. They also illustrate both his activity as re-organizer of the defensive system in Transylvania and his role as patron of arts.

During the same period, the princes of Hunedoara built their own castels — such as the ones at Colț and at Mălăești (Hunedoara county) — most of them around an older tower-house. On the southern slope of the Carpathians, at Poienari, not far from Curtea de Argeș, prince Vlad the Impaler had a powerfully fortified citadel built on the site of an older tower-house, serving as a place of refuge. So far, the research works do not allow for the detailed description of the castles raised during the 15th century. Numerous ruins, some of them of stately dimensions, located in all the three Romanian states, have not yet been systematically studied, and therefore definite conclusion with regard to their configuration is impossible to be drawn.

In the second half of the 15th century, the most important castles were built by order of prince Stephen the Great and were closely connected

with the citadels erected by the great voivode. The restoration of the court seat of Suceava and the enlargement of its girdle of fortifications turned the old fortress built during the reign of the Mușat princes into a residential castle. Though destroyed upon the demand of the Turks in the 17th century, it has preserved numerous elements that enable us to reconstitute its architecture. The princely residential quarters were flanked by the throne hall, a chapel — on the east side — and a large reception room — on the north. The buildings stretching along the four walls enclosing the castle are place so as to leave room for a patio surrounded by monumental arcades of access to the guard-rooms and to the vast cellar built in a fine Gothic style. The windows and door frames, the keystones and the fragments of vault ribs preserved prove the princely residence of Suceava to have been built in the Gothic style. The residential quarters built on the precincts of the Hotin and Neamț citadels were restored and fitted up in a similar way. The chapel in the Hotin citadel is a landmark in the stylistic development of stone buildings during the reign of Stephen the Great. The porch of the Hotin citadel, with its successively receding profiles, makes one of the most valuable specimens of Gothic masonry in Moldavia.

Ecclesiastical architecture reflected both the influence of Byzantine traditions and that of the Italian Renaissance, which was to become more and more powerful. Owing to the longlasting autochthonous traditions, wood was still the principal building material in the Romanian rural area. Of the over 100 places of worship recorded by the written documents of the time, only the wooden church in the village of Lupșa, in the centre of Transylvania, is still extant. Its plan was extremely simple; it was built of long beams disposed in horizontal crowns, a system going back to the times of the Geto-Dacians. The harmonious proportions and the simple ornaments are the peculiar features of the Romanian wood architecture and they account for the outstanding achievements of the following centuries.

Significant local syntheses were also achieved, turning to good account both the Byzantine-Balkan and the Gothic models, to which Renaissance elements were also added. Architecture during the time of Stephen the Great was the crown expression of this synthesis of styles. Hereby the ritual programme of Byzantine architecture and the technical and decorative methods of Gothic architecture merged harmoniously, yet subjected to an undoubtedly autochthonous spatial conception.

A large number of monuments built at the beginning of the 15th century were totally or partially destroyed during the Ottoman and Tartar invasions of the years that followed. Archaeological research, however, cast a conclusive light on all these constructions. The only 15th century monument preserved entirely — founded most likely by Mircea the Old — is the church of the former Brădet hermitage, situated not far from Curtea de Argeș and Cimpulung, the old capitals of Wallachia. The building methods used at Cozia were resumed here, yet simplified and adapted to the taste of the local master builders: the alternation of rows of rough hewn stone and brick recalls the princely church in Curtea de Argeș and implicitly the Byzantine building technique. The present wooden porch on the western side is no doubt a replica of the original one — also of wood — for in the 15th century wooden porches were characteristic for the Romanian monuments.

During the first 30 years of Stepfen the Great's reign, i.e. the years from 1457 to 1487, efforts were concentrated almost exclusively on building, restoring,

and enhancing the fortifications. As they were conservant with the forms of civil and military architecture, the Moldavian master builders applied part of them to the churches built after 1487. Hence, a perfect synthesis between ecclesiastical and lay architecture was achieved.

In 1487, two churches were being built simultaneously, one in the village of Pătrăuți and the other at Milișăuți. The latter was destroyed by the Austrian army during World War I, and therefore it is known only from photographs and surveys. The church in Pătrăuți, however, has been preserved intact and enables us to define the techniques and forms which were to be used for all the monuments erected during the reign of Stephen the Great. This monument, with a triconch plan and a steeple rising over the naos, was built of quarried stone and only the edges of the walls were made of well-fashioned blocks of stone. The modification of the vault system and the stronger supports add to the effect of upward soaring and enhance to the elegance of the entire edifice. Inside the church the same soaring effect is visible, which sets off the inconographic programme.

The system of the superposed diagonal arches of the vault is the innovation of the 15th century Moldavia master builders; it brings a valuable structural and artistic contribution to the heritage of world architecture.

The decoration of the façades consists mostly of tall blind arcades which cover the walls of the steeple and of the three apses; above them there is a frieze of square ceramic tiles of violet and blue shades. The windows and door frames as well as the porches are Gothic, and so is the roof divided into compartments, a very important architectural feature of the monument.

The chapels of the princely courts of Vaslui (1490), Bacău (1431), Iași (1491—1492), as well as the church erected by prince Vlad Călugărul (1481, —95) at Glavacioc monastery are characterized by a wider naos, another contribution of the Romanian builders to the development of architecture in those times.

As it has already been noted, the portale, window frames and, in general, the Gothic stone masonry in Moldavia, are closely related to those of the contemporary monuments in Transylvania — particularly in the Bistrița-Năsăud-Dej area — a fact accounted for by the close economic and political relations facilitated by the presence of the Ciceu fief (situated in the vincinity of Dej) held by prince Stephen the Great.

The year 1497 was crowned by two achievements representative for the time: the church of Neamț monastery and the palace chapel in Piatra Neamț.

The entire experience gained by the Moldavian master builders was turned to good account at the church of Neamț monastery dedicated to the Ascension. A burial chamber was placed between the naos and the pronaos, an innovation which had already appeared during the reign of Alexander the Kind. As taken over by the early religious foundations of Stephen the Great, it was to be preserved with the curches of the principal monasteries of Moldavia, sporadically spreading to Wallachia as well. A closed porch completed the Neamț Monastery on the western side. This element was also to be added to the monuments erected subsequently. Due to this features the Neamț monastery became the prototype of the main religious foundations in Moldavia during the following century.

In its initial form, the ornamentation of the monument consisted of several elements: the masonry with Gothic profiles, enamelled ceramic discs forming a frieze placed closely under the cornice and images of sainte painted in the niches. In order to obtain an effect of soaring the façade is rhythmically

covered with vertical bands of enamelled brick. As a whole, the façade decoration ot the Neamț monastery compells recognition through its variety and richness and particularly through its clever organization; it is so harmonious and well-balanced that it never looks excessively elaborate.

In the same year, 1497, a chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist was built at the princely seat in Piatra Neamț. As a new element it brought in two small apses embedded in the lateral walls of the naos to which a projection of the walls between two buttresses corresponded on the outside. Thus a composite plan came into being, so often to be used by the master builders in Moldavia later on.

Besides the many edifices raised in Moldavia (in Bacău, Iași, Botoșani, Dorohoi, etc.), Stephen the Great had a few churches built in Transylvania, of which those in the village of Vad and Feleac (Cluj county) are still extant. In Wallachia he erected a church at Rîmnicu Sărat (one of the voivode's earliest foundation built during 1473—1481) and another one at Tîrgoviște, whose ruins have recently been discovered by archaeologists. By the end of the 15th century, the Moldavian school of architecture had managed to acquire a distinct, original profile. It benefitted from the Byzantine and Gothic experience and achieved an original synthesis in European mediaeval architecture, often emphasized by prestigious researchers. One of them, for instance, was the Spanish art historian José Puig i Cadafalch, the author of several invaluable studies on this theme.

In the meantime in Transylvania efforts were made to complete the large Gothic churches, started in the 14th century. Taking as model St. Elisabeth's church in Kosiçe (Slovakia), both St. Michael's church in Cluj and the Black Church in Brașov adopted the plan of hall churches. Yet, the very ample choir of the church in Brașov seems to have been designed after the choir of the three-nave church of Sebeș; its present form, however, is due to a restoration undertaken after the great fire of 1689, whence the name of "Black" church.

A preference for vertical forms has been noticed with both monuments, as well as the use of stellated vaults and of an abundant sculpture. The western portal of the edifice in Cluj and especially the portals of the Black Church are featured by lines betraying a restless outlook, and a whirling decoration peculiar to the Late Gothic.

During the 15th century, however, the large one-nave churches also spread widely. This type is represented by the Protestant churches in Cluj (the work of the monk architect Johannes, erected in 1490—1494), Tîrgu Mureș and Dej. Hall churches, yet smaller in size, were built in the villages of Transylvania, and sporadically even in Moldavia and Wallachia. One of the earliest Gothic hall churches built in the Romanian rural area in Transylvania was the one in Ribița (Hunedoara county) erected by the Romanian voivode Vladislav and by his brother Miclăuș in the year 1417. To the same category belong other Orthodox churches such as St. Nicholas' church in Zlatna (Alba county), the church in the village of Lupșa founded by prince Cînde (mentioned as early as 1421), the churches in Cinciș (Hunedoara county), Cicău (Alba county) and St. Nicholas' church in Hunedoara (1458). Built around 1500, the church in Voivodenii Mari (Brașov county) has Gothic ribbed vaults adapted to a Byzantine structure. The belfry — open on three sides — of the church in Dipșa (Bistrița-Năsăud county) resembles a verandah; the same element is to be found at the Protestant church in Dej, which points to the

connection between these two monuments and the church in the Moldavian village of Bălinești. The Protestant church in the village of Țigău, with its western part adopting a three-sided layout, resembles the monument in Bălinești as well. All these frequent resemblances can be easily accounted for by the active circulation of masons and master builders on both sides of the Carpathians.

Sculpture in the 15th century was mostly connected with the decoration of the large churches in the towns of Transylvania. The capitals, keystones and consoles adorning the various parts of churches, as well as the statues proper, all follow a clearly delineated programme. At Sebeș-Alba, for instance, some of the statues are placed inside the church, on consoles deliberately built to house them at the half-height of the pillars; others are placed on the outside where they decorate the buttresses. Though apparently isolated, they form closely knit compositions illustrating the Christological cycle.

The Black Church in Brașov is richer in statues. They started being carved soon after 1400; that church was completed in several stages until about 1430. Towards the middle of the century the four statues forming *The Adoration of the Magi* of the "Din Deal" (Bergkirche) church in Sighișoara were completed, as well as the statues decorating the belfry of the Evangelical church of Bistrița. The monumental relief dating from 1444 and representing archangel Michael, placed in the lunette of the Roman-Catholic church in Cluj, is an obviously heraldic work, characterized by the simplifying interpretation of a provincial master. There are also other works that may be considered to belong to the same range of architectural decoration: such are *The Crucifixion* in the Evangelical church of Richiș (Sibiu county), the keystones in the Evangelical church in Sibiu, the consoles of the Evangelical church in Feldioara (Brașov county) which command attention owing to their rich, excelent ornamental sculptures, carved with verve and refinement. Hunting scenes, St. George killing the dragon, Jesus as a young man in the company of the scholars are as many racy, delectable narrative scenes recalling the illuminated manuscripts and the silverware of the time.

In the second half of the 15th century, most of the Gothic sculptures were carved in wood for the polyptich altarpieces. *The Virgin and Child* — coming from the Evangelical church of Cisnădioara, on display at the Brukenthal museum in Sibiu — is a landmark for the excellence of such works of art. Although its noble attitude, hieratic expression and asymmetrical movement recall the Gothic sculptures of the beginning of the century, the rich folds of the garment and a peculiar unrest of the composition show that it belongs to the Late Gothic.

The polyptich altarpiece of Boian (Sibiu county)—today at the Brukenthal museum as well—, whose main theme is the glorification of the Holy Mother, is very rich in iconography. Decorated with eleven reliefs, the Boian altarpiece shows some freely interpreted characteristics of the Late Gothic, with an obvious concern for the clarity of the composition and a fluent narrative. It illustrates, most probably, the activity of a workshop in Sibiu during the late decades of the 15th century.

Tombstones and funerary monuments are a very interesting chapter of 15th century sculpture. Gothic influence prevailed in the first half of the century, as illustrated, for instance, by the tombstones of the Roman-Catholic church of Baia, in the northwest of Moldavia. Most of the tombstones executed during the reign of Stephen the Great have their centre covered with stylized floral motifs or with palmettes in low-relief, inspired by Byzantine or Genoese

brocades. The transformation of the Episcopal church in Rădăuți (Suceava county) into a princely necropolis was a decisive moment in helping the ornaments with which master Jan (1479—1480) adorned the tombstones of the early Mușat princes, spread as reference models. The tombstones at Putna laid on the graves of Maria of Mangop (1477), Stephen the Great's second wife, and on those of his sons Bogdan and Petru (1480), belong to the same category.

A fine monument honours the memory of Stephen the Great, at Putna Monastery. It looks like a sarcophagus, its front side decorated with floral motifs rhythmically arranged; the lid is adorned with a central ornament consisting of a delicate combination of semipalmettes, oak leaves and flowers, while the inscription is engraved marginally.

In the meantime, the Renaissance style had made its appearance in Transylvania where it became more and more influential. The first to receive it were the tombstones and the most significant work of this early period is the tombstone on the grave of Bishop Andrea Scolari (1426) in the Roman-Catholic cathedral of Oradea. It represents the bishop as *gisant*, clad in his vestments and wearing the mitre on his head. The freer treatment of volumes and a particularly fluent interpretation distinguishes this work from the rigid models of the Gothic, anticipating the important monument in the cathedral of Alba Iulia.

The sarcophagus of Iancu of Hunedoara, in Alba Iulia, violated in the following centuries, has its lateral sides decorated with low reliefs describing the fight of cavalry troops with the Turks and their victorious return bringing along prisoners. Inspired by certain engravings of the time, the reliefs are probably carved by a local sculptor who was copying the models imposed by the court. As a matter of fact, both Iancu's tomb and his brother's Ioan Miles' (decorated with his effigy in armour and with *flamboyant* Gothic motifs) are made from limestone taken from a local quarry. Other tombstones at Sibiu and Cluj, adorned with heraldic motifs were also influenced by the Renaissance.

In Wallachia wood sculpture is represented by works of an exceptional value. The doors of the chapel of Snagov Monastery carved in 1453 make one of the most exquisite examples. They are decorated with low-reliefs (the Annunciation, the Hierarch Saints, the equestrian figures of Saint George and Demetrius) displaying the sculptor's gift for rendering harmonious, elegant movement; the billowing folds of the garments are cleverly integrated into the general rhythm of the ensemble. Each fold of the doors is surrounded by an inscription, while the empty spaces are covered with a geometrical and floral pattern of Oriental origin. The doors of the Snagov Monastery are masterpieces of the genre; they exerted a widespread influence on the sculpture created in Wallachia in the 16th century.

In the 15th century there was no stylistic interpretation in painting, for the Orthodox iconography imposed strict restrictions and inflexible traditions. Therefore, Romanian painting was to develop under the strict influence of the Byzantine models. The Gothic painting was almost exclusively adopted by the Roman-Catholics.

The earliest mural dating from the 15th century is to be found in the church of Streisîngeorgiu; only the votive painting with its inscription (of 1408) representing the Romanian prince Cîndreș and his wife Nistora have been preserved. The painter who 'made the donors' portraits faithfully rendered every detail, in this respect following the example of 14th century

paintings in Transylvania. Even closer to those stylistic models were the paintings in the church of Ribița (Hunedoara county) dating from 1417. The votive painting representing the Romanian voivodes Vladislav and Miclăuș, the incongraphy of the altar, the Christological scenes in the naos are drawn in a vigorous, elegant line which lends theses murals a noble expression and a peculiar sense of the monumental. The murals in the church of Remetea (Bihor county) represent an interesting encounter between the Byzantine style — the more rustic paintings in the narthex and the Late Gothic — the paintings in the apse. The same occurs at Sîntămăria Orlea where the personages in the altar are painted in the Byzantine style, while the donors in the votive painting are by the hand of a master belonging to the Gothic school.

The existence of some very precious miniatures and embroideries only partially makes up for the disappearance of murals dating from the time of Alexander the Kind (1400—1432) in Moldavia, of which we have only documentary and archaeological evidence. A fine epitrachilion or stole (dated 1427—1431) is quite striking owing to the vigour of expression of the two portraits — prince Alexander and his wife Marina — and to the rhythmical harmony of the composition. Worth noting is the presence of the title of avtocrator in the inscription accompanying the portraits; it demonstrates the existence of an institutional law of Byzantine tradition — granting the prince certain prerogatives — and, above all, the absolute independence of Moldavia at the beginning of the 15th century.

The masterpiece of the genre is the *epitaphios* offered by Father Superior Siluan to the Neamț monastery (1437). Its perfect, harmonious composition and colour scheme deserve our admiration. However, it is the miniatures executed by Gavril Uric in the Gospels of princess Marina (1425) that constitute the main artistic document coming down to us from the reign of Alexander the Kind. The son of a court calligrapher, *Gavril Uric* became a skilful calligrapher himself as the twelve manuscripts preserved to this day show it plentifully. The four miniatures dating from 1429 and representing the four Apostles reveal the definite separation from the Byzantine canons: the harmonious composition, the humanized figures and the realistic spirit governing every detail already herald the paintings which were to be executed later on, during the reign of Stephen the Great. The feeling of the monumental in Gavril Uric's miniatures could be related to the peculiar spirit of the mural painting during the reign of Alexander the Kind, a spirit we can trace in the fragments, scanty as they are, coming from the old church of the Humor Monastery.

The Byzantine models were gradually integrated into the structures of the local schools of painting, this is proved by the murals decorating the church of Densuș, painted by order of the Romanian princes belonging to the Mînjina family, by master Ștefan and his apprentices, in 1443. The iconography is traditionally Byzantine; yet the expressive portraits, the delicate line, the architecture of the folds, the calm harmony of the colouring are typical of master painter Ștefan, whose pictorial conception is related to the one prevailing in the murals of St. Nicholas' princely church in Curtea de Argeș. The monumental icon representing the Virgin Mary with the Child to be found in the church of Ostrovul Mare (Hunedoara county) has been attributed to the same painter. A subtle line, of great expressive variety, a rich colour scheme can still be perceived in the fragments of paintings in the church of Cetatea Colțului (Hunedoara county) proving that a highly exigent taste for

art had developed in the Romanian principalities and in Transylvania by the middle of the 15th century.

In the same light should be viewed the fragments of painting from Zlatna (Alba county) and particularly those from Hălmagiu (Arad county) in which the exceptional drawing and colouring, the rigorous composition and, above all, the noble typology, reveal the expressive quality of the school of art in Transylvania and the beneficient results of its relationships with the models created in Moldavia and Wallachia.

The same as architecture, painting in the second half of the 15th century was strongly dominated by the artistic creations in Moldavia. An obvious progress in enriching the artistic expression can be seen in the miniatures adorning the *Gospels* of Humor Monastery executed by the monk Nicodim (1473). The votive image of Stephen the Great offering the Gospel to the Virgin Mary holding Child Jesus in her arms is one of the most arresting. The image of the Virgin is deeply influenced by the Byzantine models, but the figure of Stephen is striking in its realistic rendering and exact details of the costume, in which we can easily recognize echoes of the Italian Renaissance painting. We can thus infer that a lay painting was practised at the princely court, often representing the noblemen and reflecting perhaps the prince's relations with Venice and other Italian cities.

The same lay ceremonial art — yet influenced in its style by the Bizantine East — can be recognized in the gorgeous embroidered cover woven for the tomb of princess Maria of Mangop (1477). The tragic solemnity of death is suggested, the portrait being trated with a warm poesy which turns sadness into a sort of reverie. Made by one of the greatest artists of the 15th century Romanian art, the cartoon for this embroidery was masterfully rendered on cloth. The artistic excellence of this work is a convincing argument in favour of the exceptional value of art in Moldavia, during a period of unrest when the efforts of the country were aimed at difending, arms in hand, its threatened frontiers.

The mural paintings in the churches erected beginning with 1487—1488 form a homogeneous group proving the unitary conception of the scholars at the princely court, the only ones who could establish such a clearly individualized iconographic programme. They had started from the Byzantine canons, adapting them however to the interior of a Moldavian church characterized by arches placed diagonally in tiers, a system that made the distribution of surfaces more complicated. A harmonious relation between painting and the building proper was thus achieved. It resulted in an expressive emphasis laid on the built space and in the clear organization of the painted scenes, whose message could thus be easily understood.

The regional variants of Byzantine paintings were avoided when, in 1487—1488, the churches in Voroneț, Pătrăuți, Rădăuți, St. Elijah (Suceava county) were erected, preference being given instead to the basic themes of great symbolic value. At the same time, although the stylistic heritage of Byzantine painting was still very powerful, the Moldavian school of painting acquired a distinct character, renouncing hieratism almost completely, humanizing the personages instead and highlighting the sense of the monumental. It is significant that the votive painting representing Stephen the Great is placed in the register the canons reserved for the soldier saints, a clear allusion reflecting a political rather than a religous attitude.

We do not know of the master who painted the frescoes decorating the early princely foundations of Stephen the Great ; it is only at Bălinești (Su-

ceava county) that a small inscription was discovered to contain the signature of the painter, monk *Gavril*. Obviously he can be considered one of the most important Romanian artists of the Middle Ages as his work is appreciated to be one of the most valuable in the entire Orthodox East. The church in Bălinești, of the nave type vaulted into a semicylinder offered an ample, monumental interior, with vast unbroken surfaces. Master Gavril was able to reorganize the iconography and to adapt it to these surfaces. He increased the number of the episodes in the cycle of the Passion and arranged them in a frieze securing the fluency of the narrative and the unity of composition. More than any other of his contemporaries, Gavril resorted to in-depth effects by skilfully using architectural elements or natural scenery as a background, although he preserved the Byzantine methods of rendering abstract the whole setting of the composition. We should also stress the pictorial quality of the votive painting, for the vigorous figure of the donor, chancellor Ioan Tăutu, is a genuine portrait. The solemn processions of personages reveal a rhythmical quality. The principles of harmony and refined elegance — quite obvious in structuring the compositions — were taken over from the Byzantine-Paleologan painting and, through it, from the Hellenistic traditions; moreover, echoes of the Italian Renaissance made their way into the rounder lines of the forms and some of the typological details.

Under the influence of the frescoes in the church of Bălinești, the large mural paintings executed in the years that followed at the St. Nicholas-Popăuți church in Botoșani (northern Moldavia) and at the Church of the Ascension of Neamț Monastery, adopted the frieze-like arrangement for the scenes of the Christological cycle. The frescoes of Botoșani were painted with a peculiar narative verve, the painter though still faithful in general to the iconographic canons, introducing numerous innovations in point of composition and paying particular attention to secondary characters and groups.

Of the same stylistic family, the numerous cartoons serving as models for embroideries highlight the strong personality of a flourishing school of painting. The Moldavian liturgical embroideries created during the reign of Stephen the Great — epitaphs, embroidered table-cloths for the altar, *epitrahilions* etc. — constitute an invaluable chapter of ancient Romanian art and one of the principal manifestations of the genre in European mediaeval art. The monumental vision of the mural painting can be perceived with the embroideries as well; by outshining their strictly decorative character, this feature turns the embroideries into genuine major works of painting. The composition follows strict rules, the line is vigorous and expressive, the colour range subdued. Most of them can be seen in the museum of Putna monastery (Suceava county).

The main miniature painters of the last decades of Stephen the Great's epoch were *Teodor Mărășescu* of Neamț and *Spiridon* of Putna. More elegant with Teodor Mărășescu (the Four Gospels of 1491, 1492 and 1493, all of them in libraries abroad), more vigorous with Spiridon (the Four Gospels of 1502, Bucharest Art Museum), the miniatures were obviously influenced by the work of Gavril Uric. The Byzantine compositional patterns were preserved, but the images were rendered much more expressive, more natural than the hieratic ones created by the Byzantine masters. Moreover, the dry lines of the 15th century Byzantine miniatures were replaced by a vigorous design and a colour scheme which, like the monumental painting of the time, tends to model the form in order to achieve plastic effects.

In Transylvania, painting in the 15th century (prevailingly with the Roman-Catholic Saxons and Magyars) was responsive to the means of expression of the court international Gothic at times, however, renewed through the contact with Italian Renaissance painting. Early 15th century murals were eclectic, which was but natural for a region where local masters often came in touch with itinerant ones.

However of higher artistic value prove the murals decorating the church in the village of Dîrjeu (Harghita county). Its painter was *Paul of Ung*. Although of an eclectic formation, he was responsive to the qualities of the so-called "beautiful style" in fashion at the European feudal courts, and created a unitary ensemble, a delightfully fresh narrative. Inspired by the French miniatures, master painter Paul treated the background as if it were the surface of a tapestry covering it with stylized white lilies. The lay interpretation is visible in the verve of the narration and in the delight the artist took in painting the details of garments, harness and weapons. He introduced his self-portrait — the image of a bearded knight — in a religious composition and inscribed the following in Latin: "This work was painted and prepared by master Paul, son of Stephen of Ung, A.D. 1419; while writing he had in mind a beautiful girl." Written in very small Gothic script, this delightful inscription in which wordly love gained ground as one of the most important things in life, was a message of the new epoch to come moreover so, it was quite justified during the spiritual mutations occurring in the life of Transylvania until the plenary victory of the humanistic spirit of the Renaissance.

The written documents of the time often mention the Cluj school of painting whose works have been identified in various Transylvanian edifices; they are characterized by compositions with many personages in which details from local life are introduced. The line is often fluent but monotonous, and so is the chromatic harmony despite a rich colour scheme. The main representative of the Cluj school of painting in the 15th century was Toma, a refined eclectic artist who had assimilated both the features of the northern or Flemish Gothic and the innovations of Italian painting, which at the time had already reached the early stage of the Renaissance.

The iconoclastic destructions caused by the Reformation preclude the study and apreciation of mediaeval painting in the Reformed and the Evangelical centres of Transylvania, except for the murals preserved in the state churches. To these one can add, however, some representative murals, such as one decorating the "Matthew loggia" of Hunedoara castle. The armorial bearings, plant stems, banderoles bearing inscriptions, various personages — men and women — in affected, elegant attitudes, everything in this mural is in keeping with the gallant vision of the epoch, during which one of the favourite themes was *The Siege of the Castle of Love*. The murals in the burial chapel of the peasant citadel of Hărman (Brașov county), dating from 1460—1470, illustrate a new wave of internationalization of the Gothic style, based however on the conservative style of provincial German painting. At a time when European painting was developing robust forms, mainly modelled after the Italian school, the Hărman painting marked a return to the linear style, though heraldic rather than narrative.

Similar changes — almost popular in form — are noticeable in the murals decorating the southern nave of St. Michael's church in Cluj, and also those in the "Din Deal" church in Sighișoara; fragments of the latter murals (1483)— superior in point of artistry — were probably the work of painter Valentin, mayor of Sighișoara in 1490.

However, a rapid decline of the Gothic mural painting occurred at the time; it was due perhaps to the polyptychs (altar pieces) which vied with the murals in point of excellence, especially in towns. While mural paintings were conservative and ever more provincial in form, the 15th century altar pieces evince not only a definitely superior quality but also a permanent renewal in point of style. In the village of Prejmer (Brașov county), for instance, one can still notice the traditional forms and simple compositions, but the artist's timid attempts at rendering the geometrical perspective are also present.

The polyptych altar of St. Margaret's church in Mediaș is by far superior in point of quality. Its author was surely one of the main representatives of the "Danubian school", and a promoter of the Transylvanian school of painting during the period of transition from the Gothic to the Renaissance. The scenes of the Mediaș altarpiece are designed generously, with wide spaces and numerous planes; the rich narrative is obvious both in the dynamic organization of the main groups and in the careful description of secondary episodes and groups, many of which can be regarded as independent compositions. The use of elements of geometric perspective and the concern for landscapes reveal a Renaissance type of sensitiveness. Far from being a mere abstract pretext or a decorative convention, nature pervades all the scenes with the force of real life.

The effort to renew art can be perceived with many paintings in Transylvania, towards the end of the 15th century. Special mention should be made of a fresco, dated 1477—1490, placed over the southwestern portal of the Black Church in Brașov, obviously the work of an artist trained in the ambience of the Renaissance; the numerous Italianate elements — monumentality, rounded modelling, typology — are proof thereof. The portraits and especially the landscape with its softly undulating hills, trees with rounded crowns, villages with fortified churches, are as many elements pointing to the ever more stable penetration of the Renaissance in Transylvanian art.

During the 15th century, the art of metalwork — bronze, silver and gold — flourished greatly, mainly in Transylvania, where guilds and artisans of high skill were to be found in almost every town. The existence of precious metals in the local mines as well as the development of trade relations with many a European country helped the cities of Transylvania turn metal processing into an important means of economic development. Silversmiths and goldsmiths enjoyed a great prestige and often held prominent positions in the principality. The main commissions came from the Romanian reigning princes who were interested both in ornaments for their clothes, silver plates and dishes, and also in cult objects which had to be processed in keeping with the Byzantine formal and iconographic canons. There were also important silversmiths' workshops in Suceava, Târgoviște and other cities in Moldavia and Wallachia, which accounts for the complex stylistic features of silverware in the Romanian states where Gothic and Byzantine elements often combined with local ones to form original syntheses.

The masterpiece of silverwork in the 15th century Romanian states is the silver coffin of St. John the New, today at St. George's church in Suceava. Brought to the capital of the country in 1414 or 1415 by order of Prince Alexander the Kind, the relics were laid in a sumptuous coffin decorated with scenes from the life of the martyr saint. Fashioned by hammering and engraving, the silver plates that make up the coffin are the work of a skilful master who

decorated it with simple, discrete ornamental motifs. As he was to refer the life of an almost contemporary saint, a victim of the Tartars who were still endangering the peace of Moldavia, the silversmith used an original iconography which must have been created in the intellectual milieu of Suceava. Combining Byzantine inconographic elements with direct references to the costumes and weapons of the time, the silver coffin of Suceava illustrates the main artistic trends in Moldavia at the time of Alexander the Kind.

Ceramics was often integrated into the architecture of the time. Coloured enamelled ceramic discs were usually used to crown the upper part of the monuments, right under the cornice, and to create in the shadowed portion under the roof a precious decor embellished with heraldic reliefs or coloured enamel. Sometimes they decorated the arches and archivolts; some other times vertical ornamental bands of enamelled brick werve added (at the church of Neamț monastery for instance). Enamelled bricks with geometric motifs also decorate the apse of the altar in the church of St. John of Piatra Neamț and the upper part of its façade. Drawing on both Byzantine and Western models, the Moldavian masterbuilders achieved an original synthesis. Thus the manner in which the ceramic decoration is placed on the façades of Stephen the Great's monuments has no match in the architecture of mediaeval Europe.

The large number of ceramic discs, plaques, tiles — enamelled or not — discovered in all the three Romanian states can only be accounted for by the existence of very active local workshops, as well as by the fact that such works were in great demand at the time. Widely circulated heraldic motifs (the mermaid with two tails, the couple of lovers, the stag, the lion and, in Moldavia, the frequent decoration with the country's coat-of-arms) met with exotic ones (the elephant, the camel) to form a highly varied repertory of forms. Ceramic ornaments were discovered in many peasant cottages as well, which proves that interiors were more richly decorated than one might suppose for such simple dwellings.

Although just initiated, research works in 15th century ornamental ceramics help to draw the conclusion that the stylistic means of expression of the genre reflect both the continuity of a very old tradition in this cultural area and the ever more active relationships with the West which, in the 15th century, was on its way to reassess the functions and significance of art as a whole.

Renaissance Synthesis

The 16th century was a period of dramatic social and political instability for the Romanian states. The centrifugal tendencies of the great boyars in Moldavia and Wallachia weakened the authority of the reigning prince and endangered the country's defence. The military victories of the Ottoman Empire on the Lower Danube, on the northern shores of the Black Sea and in Central Europe, increased the threat which had loomed large against the independence of the Romanian states for more than a century. After the conquest of several strategic fortifications at the mouth of the Danube, the occupation of Belgrade and the defeat of Hungary at Mohács in 1526, the

Ottoman power was enveloping as it were the Romanian territories on all sides. To all this contributed the frequent and devastating attacks of the Tartars of Crimea who had become the Turks' vassals as early as 1475. Under these tragical circumstances, the Romanian states were forced to accept the suzerainty of the Porte, managing however to preserve their autonomy.

This was the fate of all the three principalities inhabited by the Romanians, for the Turks respected the autonomy of Transylvania as well, considering it, on account of political and national reasons, a territory only occupied by the Hungarian kings. These conditions led to the strengthening of the long-standing relations between the three Romanian states. These relations, though not always active on the political plan, were mostly fruitful on the cultural one, during this period the exchange of artists and of artistic forms becoming more frequent than before. The inhabitants of Transylvania — Romanians, Saxons and Szecklers alike — often turned for help to the reigning princes of Wallachia and Moldavia. The churches these princes founded in Transylvania were often the first seeds of polarization and genuine cultural unity.

The princes of Wallachia and Moldavia understood that, given the growth of the Ottoman power, culture was the main instrument through which national values and national awareness could be preserved; therefore, through cultural and artistic initiatives, they secured a spiritual protectorate over the whole Orthodox East which had fallen under Ottoman rule. The works of building new monasteries and of restoring the older ones at Mount Athos, which the Romanian princes had started during the 14th century continued and enhanced in amplitude. As a matter of fact, after the fall of Constantinople, the Romanian princes were the only sovereigns who could openly and coherently oppose the new power established at Constantinople. This explains the churches the Romanian princes built and the gifts they offered to various monasteries in Greece (Epirus), Bulgaria (Rila), Jerusalem and even the distant Sinai.

On the other hand, the cultural and political implications of the Reformation can be inferred from the intense activity of the Romanian printing shops. The printing press was introduced to the Romanian states in 1508 and ever since it proved to be an important instrument in preserving and enhancing the national awareness. Suffice it to say that Coresi, the first printer, had his presses installed both at Braşov in Transylvania and at Tîrgovişte in Wallachia, in order to understand their great contribution to the further affirmation of the spiritual unity of the Romanians north and south of the Carpathians. On the other hand, they proved how real this unity was, since there was no language barrier between the Romanians inhabiting a territory with a traditionally unitary culture. At the same time, the strong opposition to the Reformation induced the creation of inconographic programmes specific of the Romanian society. Lowered by the Hungarian laws to a precarious cultural and social condition, the Romanians in Transylvania resorted ever more often to the moral and material support of the princes reigning south and east of the Carpathians. Their donations and the churches they founded were stimulating ties for the development of Romanian art and culture as a whole.

Thus, towards the end of the 16th century art in all the Romanian principalities shared numerous common features, anticipating by the cultural unity it implied the great political union achieved in 1600 under the sceptre of Michael the Brave.

It is easy to understand why all throughout the 16th century, the efforts of the Romanian princes focused mainly on building defensive fortifications: military fortresses, town citadels, refuge strongholds for rural communities, fortified courts and castles, fortified monasteries and churches. As several citadels — especially the ones on the banks of the Danube — had been conquered by the Turks, efforts were indeed necessary to raise new fortifications. The Porte, however, did strictly forbid the construction of any important defensive system, so that the cities in Wallachia and Moldavia could only raise simple fortifications which could not resist the attacks of any regular army.

Conditions were different in Transylvania, where certain cities enjoying the privileges and immunity granted to the Saxon colonists were adapting their systems of fortifications to the requirements of fire arms.

The citadels built in the second half of the 16th century by Italian architects and master masons such as Filippo Pigafetta, Paolo Catanio, Ottavio Boldigera, introduced essential elements peculiar to the style in fashion in the Italian peninsula. The most important construction of this type was the citadel of Oradea built on a central plan with five bastions; the walls, 2—3 meters thick and 9—10 meters high, were built of brick laid on a stone foundation; the edges were made of blocks of dressed stone. In 1551 Domenico da Bologna built a princely residence in the inner court of the Gherla citadel; its decoration shows the penetration of elements belonging to the Italian Renaissance style.

In Moldavia and Wallachia fortifications were built seemingly aimed at protecting the monasteries; actually they were nothing but disguised fortresses. In eluding thus the restrictions imposed by the Porte , the Romanian princes were able to accomplish an important building programme. That they were not mere monastery fortifications is proved by the fact that each of these citadels comprised a princely residence as well. The system of rectangular enclosures with corner towers and a gate tower on one of the sides was widely spread in Moldavia (Probota, Slatina, Sucevița and others).

Continuing the construction and fortifications started in the previous century, numerous villages situated in the areas colonized by Saxons or Szecklers were provided with refuge and defensive strongholds. Most of them were built around the parish church which sometimes was itself turned into a powerful fortress. In no other part of Europe was the number of fortified churches so large as to turn them into a specific phenomenon.

In Transylvania, the inventiveness of their defence solutions as well as the plastic expressiveness of their buildings endow the fortified churches with a peculiar beauty (Biertan, Deal Frumos, Cristian etc.). Besides, they can be rightly considered the greatest contribution mediaeval Transylvanian architecture has brought to the European architectural heritage.

Unlike fortifications, with their great variety of forms and stylistic combinations, civil architecture is by far more unitary, its main characteristic being the assimilation of the architectural and decorative elements peculiar to the Renaissance.

Houses made of brick and stone appeared late enough in the Romanian cities. As a rule the Renaissance elements, spread by Italian masterbuilders travelling all over Europe, included for the time being only window frames and portals; the masonry techniques and the spatial conception were still highly conservative. Indeed, as they were accustomed to build fortifications with strong, massive walls, the local craftsmen used the same severe forms for

civil buildings. In 1521 a new wing was added to the Altenberger house in Sibiu which had been built in the previous century. Although this new wing was still reminiscent of the Gothic, the window and door frames heralded the new style of the Renaissance. Similar Renaissance features were to be found later on during the century at Mediaș (the Schuller house), Bistrița (the house of Johannes the Mason and the silversmith's house), Turda (the voivode's palace) etc.

It is quite probable that the forms of the Renaissance we can identify both in religious monuments and in civil buildings reached Moldavia through Transylvanian builders and particularly through the masons of Bistrița. One of the buildings at Probota monastery, considered to be a princely residence, has stone window and door frames typical of the Transylvanian Renaissance; their pattern is taken over by the plaster ornaments consisting of coloured graffito. Fragments of similar frames have been discovered in the ruins of the palace at Hîrlău, near Iași.

Another category of country mansions includes constructions of reduced proportions, monolithic in shape, built on a rectangular plan, with a carefully executed masonry, fine stone window and door frames with profiles typical of the Renaissance and delicately modelled floral motifs. Particularly important from this point of view is the princely dwelling at Slatina monastery (Suceava county), built by prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu (1552—1561; 1564—1568). Of similar importance are the princely residences at Sucevița Monastery and Galata (in Iași); they are constructions of impressive proportions, with vast halls yet devoid of stone frames which were replaced by the traditional wooden ones.

Built by Prince Mircea Ciobanul about the middle of the 16th century, the princely court in Bucharest (nowadays known as "Curtea Veche", the Old Court) was an impressive construction. It consisted of a palace protected by precinct walls provided with gates and rampart walks. The court in Iași, a city which under Alexandru Lăpușneanu became the capital of Moldavia, was similar to the one in Bucharest.

The most representative palace is the one built by order of Petru Cercel (1583—1585) at Tîrgoviște, in the 16th century. Together with the older palace of Mircea the Old (early 15th century), the princely court of Tîrgoviște was an imposing architectural ensemble completed by the Chindia tower and the monumental chapel built by the same prince, Petru Cercel.

In the second half of the 16th century the Renaissance style penetrated ever more widely into the urban areas, especially in Transylvania. Owing to the parcelling into small lots of the territory within the town walls, the façades looking on to the street were narrow, with only few windows; the constructions stretched widely along the sides of a patio which was entered through a passage provided with a portal and a strong gate. Both the portal and the window frames were made of stone; we should note however that the motifs, though typical of the Renaissance, were freely interpreted, with the rich imagination characteristic of provincial masters.

The ecclesiastic architecture of the 16th century in the Romanian states shows a much more complicated structure, as stylistic influences were associated with the obvious effort to find new decorative means of expression. In Transylvania religious construction gradually decreased in number; the few that have been built are characterized by a continuous merging of the forms of the Late Gothic into the stylistic innovations of the Renaissance.

In Moldavia, the 16th century continued to employ the forms firmly established by the school of architecture founded under Stephen the Great. In Wallachia, whose architectural heritage had been destroyed to a great extent by invasions and internecine struggles, the evolution of architecture followed a different course. In the first two decades of the century, Radu the Great (1495—1508) and Neagoe Basarab (1512—1521), reigning princes of a comprehensive humanistic vision, founded prestigious monuments whose spatial and particularly decorative innovations exerted a strong influence upon many generations of craftsmen to follow. The two model-monuments were the church of Dealu Monastery in Tîrgoviște — founded by Radu the Great — and the Episcopal Church of Curtea de Argeș — erected by Neagoe Basarab. The frequent interpretations of the two edifices and the adaptation of the stone decoration to the possibilities of expression peculiar to brick ornaments resulted in the crystallization of a local architectural style; hereby a genuine Wallachian school of architecture came into being, contributing original creations to the artistic production of the time.

The following elements are most significant for the conception of the space and of the relationship between the monument and its environment, both in Moldavia and in Wallachia: the spread of the open porch (expressing, as it has often been stressed, a fundamental relation between man and the world); the similar use of the main planimetric and spatial types (the triconch plan prevailingly for monastery churches and the rectangular one-nave plan for the princes' and boyars' chapels); and the integration of the *camera mortuaria* instead of its mere addition to the church as was the case with the funerary chapels of some churches in the Balkans or in the West.

Taking into consideration the artistic confluences in point of architecture as well, one can say that, all through the 16th century, Romanian architecture developed within a phenomenon of cultural convergence, achieving — towards the end of the century — a certain unity of style.

During the first decades of the 16th century, in Transylvania most of the churches were built in the countryside, Gothic forms and ornaments being steadily used. With few exceptions they were one-nave churches, sometimes of imposing proportions (the Evanghelical churches in Curciu and Dîlos, Sibiu county). The ornamental forms of the Renaissance were slow to penetrate into the architecture of constructions still faithful to the Gothic style. At Biertan, for instance, there are two beautiful portals with profiles in the Renaissance style. In 1514 the simple Gothic hall at Mineu (Sălaj county) was provided with a remarkable portal of red marble; it was the work of Giovanni Fiorentino, an Italian craftsman who also built the tabernacle-niche and the font (of red marble as well).

The only religious monuments designed and executed entirely in the Renaissance style is the Lázó chapel, added to the northern side of the Roman-Catholic cathedral in Alba Iulia in 1512. Its façades are faced with dressed stone and decorated with rich sculptures in relief. The portal with its two pillasters adorned with floral motifs, is crowned by a gorgeous yet eclectic entablature. The corners of the façades are marked by fluted pilasters rising as high as the cornice of the portal; the upper part is provided with niches for statues. Having adopted Lombard and Tuscan elements, the eclectic character of Lázó chapel is enhanced in the interior by a reticulated Gothic vault adorned with heraldic escutcheons.

Special attention deserve the works carried out by the architect Petrus Italus of Lugano who consolidated the church in Bistrița (in the northeast

of Transylvania), partially reconstructing its western side too. In 1560—1563 he built three portals to this church; they were framed in by semi-colonnettes, the sides of the galbe forming undulating curves and countercurves. Although apparently Baroque in style, this decoration is in fact a synthesis of Late Gothic and Renaissance forms; it spread widely to the German provincial areas but also in Poland whence it made its way — sporadically — to Transylvania where its usual name was that of "Polish attic".

Dating from early decades of the 16th century, the church of St. George in Suceava is a replica of the Ascension church at Neamț Monastery. The church in the village of Părhăuți (Suceava county) erected in 1522 by chancellor Gavril Trotușan, resembles a real fortress. With its thick walls and narrow windows devoid of any exterior decoration, the church in Părhăuți commands particular attention owing to its open porch with two wide arcades, and to a watch-tower open on three sides.

After he came to the throne in 1527, Prince Petru Rareș gave a new stimulus to Moldavian architecture. In 1530 he started reconstructing the Probota Monastery, which was to become the necropolis of the Rareș family. Dating from the early times of the Mușat dynasty, the old church had collapsed because of landslides. As after some restoration works it collapesd again, Petru Rareș decided to rebuild it on a new site. The model of the new church was that of the great churches of Putna and Neamț monasteries, yet added with a new element, i.e. the very wide windows of the porch. The new church of Humor Monastery (Suceava county) was built in the year 1530 as well.

In 1532 Petru Rareș founded a new church for Moldovița Monastery, as the old one, built by Alexandru the Kind some hundred years before, had collapsed because of a landslide. The plan of Neamț and Putna was taken over again, yet with an open porch. Other churches were built at Baia, Suceava, Coșula (Botoșani county) etc.

Together with the planimetric and spacial forms, the masterbuilders employed by Petru Rareș took over the repertoire of Gothic ornaments as well. As by that time the Gothic had ceased to be a fashionable style in the West, all those elements were no longer borrowings proper, but interpretations of long-time assimilated forms which had already become tradition. Concomitantly, certain Renaissance elements can be identified at the interior door-frames of Probota and Moldovița.

In what concerns the monumental decoration of the façades, it is to be noted that the ornaments consisting of enamelled ceramics, a characteristic of Stephen the Great's epoch, were given up entirely. Instead, the façades were prepared to be adorned with murals. They resulted in a highly original architectural expression which secures the Petru Rareș monuments a prominent place in world art.

During the 16th century, the last great founder of churches to continue the Mușat dynasty tradition in Moldavia was Alexandru Lăpușneanu. Like Petru Rareș, he started by reconstructing the church of the Bistrița monastery, founded by Alexander the Kind. Once more the models used were of the churches of Putna and Neamț. Its very thick walls and small windows, however, gave the new edifice an austere aspect, slightly toned down by the discrete decoration which imitated in plaster bricks of various colours.

Slatina monastery is the most important edifice raised by Alexandru Lăpușneanu. It has one of the largest monastery churches in Moldavia. Again the church of Neamț monastery served as a model, but this time the

lateral aisles were concealed in the thickness of the masonry. Hence the calm lines of the façades harmoniously linked with the style of the princely residence standing south of the church. The architectural ensemble served several purposes: it was both a citadel surrounded by strong walls, with watch-towers and ramparts, a princely residence, and a monastery with its own church and outhouses.

The prince also carried out extensive building-works at Mount Athos. Thus, he re-built entirely the great monastic complex of Dochiariu in the traditional Athonite manner. The complex plentifully illustrates the vigour of a cultural phenomenon able to support generosity and, in doing so, demonstrating its vivid power of assimilation, synthesis and interpretation.

In the years 1582—1584, the powerful Movilești boyars founded the monastery of Sucevița. Its functions were again multiple: it was a monastery, a citadel serving as refuge and a boyar's residence at the same time. Art historian Paul Henry considered its church to be a testament of old Moldavian art. In keeping with the tradition of the great churches of Moldavian monasteries, Sucevița is built on a triconch plan, it has a *camera mortuaria*, a narthex and a porch. The apses have three windows each instead of one, securing thus the penetration of light, in contrast with the mysterious dimness inside Byzantine monuments. The north and south entrances to the porch are protected by smaller porches. The relation between void and solid is favourable to the void, the light, aerial aspect of the composition resembling the porches in Wallachia. In this, the Sucevița Monastery proves to be a moment of convergence between the schools of architecture in the two Romanian principalities. This phenomenon is also illustrated by the churches of Galata, Aroneanu and Hlincea monasteries.

The construction in the years 1499—1501 of the church of Dealu Monastery by Radu the Great, represents an important stage in the evolution of the architectural forms in Wallachia. The walls are made of dressed and profiled stone. The nave is a faithful interpretation of the model established at Cozia, at the end of the 14th century. The narthex, however, is much longer, and the compartment designed for the princely necropolis — recalling the *camera mortuaria* in the Moldavian churches — introduces an element never met before with the Wallachian constructions: two slender steeples rise over the necropolis proper; together with the steeple over the naos they form the crowning of the church. The two small steeples play both a compositional role as they lend equilibrium to the general silhouette of the edifice, a symbolic role, in that they mark the place where the princes were buried, and a decorative one as well. Both its programme and its spatial composition make of Dealu Monastery an autochthonous creation with no correspondent in any other architecture of the time.

The church is girdled as it were by a string course dividing the façades into two unequal registers, each of them decorated with blind arches; the bases and drums of the steeples as well as the western façade are decorated with interlaced ornaments carved in stone. By using an eclectic decoration (including also elements characteristic of Ottoman architecture) the craftsmen who built Dealu Monastery achieved a new composition in perfect harmony with the architecture of the whole building.

For a long time, the church of the Dealu Monastery was to be often imitated and interpreted by the builders in Wallachia: its decoration especially contributed to the crystalization of an original style characteristic of the local school of architecture.

The building activity of Radu the Great materialized in other famous monuments as well. In the years 1503—1505 he raised at Tîrgoviște an imposing church on the plan of an inscribed Greek cross with five steeples, designed to be the metropolitan church of Wallachia; it was demolished in 1889 by the French architect André Lecomte de Noüy. The cultural activity of Radu the Great covered a wide area. Thus, the prince managed to introduce the printing-press into the country soon after its invention; by bringing Patriarch Nifon to Wallachia for a long stay he was able — even if only formally — to move the oecumenic patriarchate to Wallachia his countless donations to Mount Athos made it possible to reassert the idea of an imperial protectorate and laid the foundation of a policy which the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga so aptly called "Byzantium after Byzantium". All this set him up as a model for his contemporaries who called him "the Great", even though he had not won any victory on the battlefield.

In 1512 Prince Neagoe Basarab acceded to the throne of Wallachia. His fruitful building activity largely contributed to the development of Wallachia's school of architecture. The main church he founded is the metropolitan church in Curtea de Argeș. Wishing to make of it a representative monument designed to be a princely necropolis as well, the builders adopted an original solution: the naos was made much wider and twelve columns were introduced in the centre in order to support the vault. The entire structure was crowned by three cupolas, one over the twelve columns, two over the corners of the western side. The eastern side, built on a triconch plan and provided with a hexagonal cupola, follows the deeply rooted tradition of the Cozia monastery.

Here again we must stress the highly original organization of the space, the integration of the necropolis inside the walls of a place of worship having no equivalent in any other architecture in Europe. The façades are divided into two registers by a median stringcourse that looks like a twisted rope. The lower register is divided into rectangular panels each of them surrounded by three stone mouldings. The upper register is a succession of arcades made of mouldings; inside the arcades there are decorative rosettes with an interlaced design and plant motifs. The prominent cornice consists of two superposed rows of stalactites and alveoles characteristic of Islamic architecture and widely spread in the Ottoman world. The cupolas are decorated with mouldings in the shape of arcades at the cupola rising over the naos, and in the shape of rectangular panels at the central cupola of the pronaos. The two small steeples on the western side are twisted round their axes, and hence they lend an unexpected Baroque aspect into the already rich monumental decoration. The portal is magnificently adorned: the arcade above it is decorated with white-lily flowers fretted into a reciprocal motif (i.e. the negative repeating the positive). The same composition is used for the decorative stone enclosure surrounding the monument.

It has been noted that the ornamental elements allow for comparisons with the monuments in the Caucasus or with those of the widespread Arab architecture, and even with the distant Egypt. Beyond all possible identification of each separate motifs, the decoration body of the church of Argeș is highly original in point of composition and adaptation to the architecture of the monument.

The church of Snagov Monastery situated near Bucharest, is another of Neagoe Basarab's important foundations. It was directly inspired by the

architecture prevailing at Mount Athos. The naos is in the shape of an inscribed Greek cross, yet enlarged laterally by the addition of apses. The eastern part too has been enlarged as well. Surprisingly enough, the pronaos is treated like a porch, with columns made of brick, shaped in such a way that groups of two colums have different decorative forms.

A new decorative solution for the brick churches was adopted at Bucovăț (on the lower course of the Olt river). The church here was built in 1572. The decorations of the Dealu Monastery were taken over at Bucovăț resulting in an artistic ensemble of great beauty. If we also take into consideration its harmonious volumes, we can say that the church of the Bucovăț Monastery attests the fully mature stage the new school of architecture in Wallachia had reached. Built in 1572 as well, the church of the Cobia Monastery (Dîmbovița county) observes the disposition of the volumes of the metropolitan church in Curtea de Argeș. It is, however, a unique monument in point of decoration. Its façades, on which the tall silhouettes of the blind arcades are outlined, show a fastuous polychromy, as they are entirely covered with enamelled bricks.

The last two decades of the 16th century were of particular value for Romanian architecture, as they witnessed active interference with the schools in Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania as well as the obvious tendency towards the unification of their forms and decoration. In 1586 Prince Petru Cercel founded the Princely Church in Tîrgoviște, a monument of great architectural complexity. A very original synthesis resulted from employing the traditional inscribed-Greek-cross form for the naos, the two-cupolas pronaos inspired by the architecture of the church of Dealu Monastery, and the porch which was a permanent element in the Romanian architecture of the century. The church and the palace were connected by a covered bridge so that the prince could attend the divine service from the loft situated on the western side of the naos.

In response to the request of the Romanians living in the district of Șcheii Brașovului, Petru Cercel enlarged their church, built by Neagoe Basarab, by adding to it a new wing in the shape of an inscribed Greek cross, topped by a bell-tower. The façade decorations of brick courses alternating with plaster panels is typical of Wallachia. The construction was to be completed in 1595 by the Moldavian Prince Petru Aron who also added a small porch to the northern side of the curch.

The transposition in brick of the decoration created at Dealu in profiled stone was to pass through several stages illustrated by the churches of Bucovăț, Tutana and Mărcuța, and to culminate at the church of Mihai Vodă in Bucharest founded by Michael the Brave in 1589—1590. The prince had gained a rich experience as builder of churches, for in 1587—1588 he had completed a church his father, Prince Pătrașcu the Good, had started building, and he had also supervised the construction of another church which prince Mihnea had founded in 1582. The church of Mihai Vodă was built on the model of a monument raised by Radu the Great. The decoration was obviously patterned on that of Dealu, the bricks used for mouldings were of a special format. This monument illustrates both a praiseworthy effort to interpret the forms, and a permanent concern to reinstate the authority of famous models which had predominated earlier during the century.

Besides monuments raised at Caracal (Olt county) — where he built a princely residence — at Clocociov (on the middle reaches of the Olt river), in the town of Ploiești and in the Buzău mountains (northeast of Wallachia).

Michael the Brave founded several churches for the Romanians in Transylvania. Following the agreement reaches at with Sigismund Báthory, the prince of Transylvania, and the recognition of the Orthodox Metropolitan Seat of Transylvania beginning with the year 1596, a metropolitan monastery was built at Alba Iulia. Though demolished in 1714 to make room for the Austrian citadel Alba Carolina, we know of it from some old plans which show that it consisted of two churches: a larger one built on the plan of an inscribed Greek cross and a smaller one built on a three-apsed plan, and functioning as a chapel. Given that the Metropolitan Seat of Transylvania was under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Seat of Wallachia, it is easy to understand why the church in Alba Iulia was built after the model of the Metropolitan Church in Tîrgoviște.

In the brief period of time when Michael the Brave reigned in Transylvania as well, he carried on a prodigious activity as founder of churches, demonstrating — in this way too — that the unification of the Romanians was not a chance event, but the natural outcome of a firm belief. The Prince erected a church at Făgăraș, in the south of Transylvania, another in the village of Lujerdiu, near Cluj, and one at Ocna Sibiului. He also had a chapel built in the citadel of Tîrgu Mureș, in the centre of Transylvania. He carried out restoration works at the church in Șcheii Brașovului as well, as at the church of the Rîmnețhermitage dating from the 14th century. The church in Ocna Sibiului, the only church founded by Michael the Brave in Transylvania preserved to this day, has its façades decorated with elements of obvious Wallachian inspiration i.e. , a median string course placed between two rows of bricks laid sidewise.

Sculpture in the 16th century was characterized by a peculiar combination of obsolete elements and surprising creations which, in point of means of expression, daringly assimilated innovations coming from the Italian Renaissance.

Figural sculpture is represented by a few separate pieces and fragments. Of remarkable interest is the pulpit decorated with basreliefs at the church in Biertan attributed to sculpter Ulrich of Brașov (1523). The three reliefs, *The Prophecy of Simeon*, *Prayer in the Garden* and *The Crucifixion*, are narrative sculptures. The figures are thickset yet expressive, the drapes — modelled correctly enough — recall in their composition the art of Veit Stoss. Knowing that after Veit Stoss' death four of his sons came to Transylvania and set up workshops in Mediaș, Sighișoara and Brașov, it is quite probable that a stylistic group should have been constituted to work in his manner. Several pieces belonging to the same stylistic family were executed from 1515 to 1525. The most important of them are the statues representing apostle Jacob the Great and the Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus, today at the Brukenthal museum in Sibiu. They are typologically analogous to many works by Veit Stoss, both in Cracow and Nüremberg; quite illustrative in this sense are the treatment of the Virgin's face and the portrait of Jacob interpreted with great finesse.

The reliefs decorating the monumental polyptich altar of the Evangelical church in Sebeș (Alba county) reveal the same influence of Veit Stoss' manner, yet amended by his disciple, Pavel of Levoča (Slovakia). The slight inclination to the grotesque and the decorative billowing of the drapes are typical of Gothic statuary at the close of its historical existence. Worth noting are also the statues adorning the altar of the Evangelical church in Băgaciu

(Brașov county), dating from 1518. The clever modelling of faces, the studied composition of the folds creating complicated undulations show that these works belong to the Late Gothic in Transylvanian sculpture.

Unlike 16th century architecture, which so readily responded to the stylistic forms of the Renaissance, the range of the autonomous statuary was extremely reduced. This is all the more surprising as the production of carved window and door frames was very rich, important workshops functioning in Cluj and Sibiu. One can even talk of a specific Renaissance frame style in Transylvania, featured by softer profiles and by the frequent ornamentation of the empty spaces with plant motifs.

The most important work of Renaissance architecture in Transylvania — the northern chapel of the Roman-Catholic cathedral in Alba Iulia — is also the most outstanding achievement of the Renaissance decorative and figural sculpture. On the bases of the pilasters there are several reliefs representing scenes from the Bible, from the lives of the saints or from Greek mythology. The perfect equilibrium of the compositions, the rounded modelling, the preference for nudes and for classical drapings clearly point out the influence of the Renaissance.

Particularly interesting is the portal of the sacristy of St. Michael's church in Cluj, donated by Reverend Johannes Klyn (Klein) in 1528. The rectangular frame and the pediment are richly adorned with heraldic and floral elements, as well as with a large number of cherubs. In the centre of the tympanum there is the portrait in high relief of a man wearing his hair long and a beret, probably the protrait of the donor. Recalling the workshop of Anton Pilgram in Vienna, the portal of Cluj had no direct influence on sculpture in Transylvania. However it expresses an obvious responsiveness to more elaborate decorative forms, and thus anticipates a significant evolution.

The tombstones in Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia in the 16th century display some common features: the commemorative inscription — always excised, which lends it great plasticity — forms the decoration of the border. In Moldavia, in imitation of the tombstones carved during the reign of Stephen the Great, the central part of the lid is covered with floral motifs, an interpretation inspired by brocades. Starting from the mid 16th century, the decoration becomes agitated and the rendering of ornament tends to be dominated by an almost naturalistic descriptivism. The tombstones in Wallachia have the same basic compositional structure but the central part has the cross and the tree of life carved on it. A notable exception is the epitaph on the tombstone of Prince Radu of Afumați (1529): the border with its inscription is surrounded by another border of interlaced design, while the centre proper is covered with an inscription relating the voivode's military achievements; the voivode himself is portrayed on horseback, holding the sceptre in his right hand, wearing the crown on his head and a fluttering mantle. As it has been noted, the equestrian relief is inspired by the representations of soldier saints on the doors of Snagov monastery. The same theme was taken up again for the tombstone of boyar Albu Golescu in the church of Vierosi (Argeș county), in 1574, as well as on the tombstone of Stroe Buzescu, one of Michael the Brave's famous generals buried at Stănești in the north-east of Oltenia in 1602.

The principal funerary monuments in Transylvania are the sarcophagi of queen Isabel (1559) and of Prince John Sigismund (1571), both in the Roman-Catholic Cathedral of Alba Iulia. On the lids of both, the deceased are represented as *gisant*. The sides of queen Isabela's sarcophagus are deco-

rated with reliefs illustrating the parable of the Good Samaritan. Battle scenes adorn the sides of .Prince John Sigismund sarcophagus. With both sarcophagi one can easily recognize the stylistic vision of the Italian Renaissance.

Although few in number, the carved coats-of-arms are particularly interesting both historically and artistically. The carved armorial bearings of Prince Neagoe Basarab (c. 1517) represents a unicorn fighting the dragon which symbolizes the Ottoman power. The elegant design and the well-rounded modelling are typical of the Renaissance. Another exceptional work of art is the votive inscription laid by Prince Petru Rareș on the southern façade of St. Demetrius' Church in Suceava (1534). Here Moldavia's coat-of-arms is enclosed in a medallion of laurel leaves supported by two cherbus. The composition is evidently inspired by the balustrade of the Sixtine Chapel carved by Mino da Fiesole.

The so-called hand crosses make up a chapter of sculpture to which comprehensive studies have only recently been devoted. Used during the liturgical service, they offered a sort of refuge to the Orthodox sculptors who were forbidden by the religious canons to carve divine personages in relief. Fashioned with numerous microreliefs representing biblical scenes and saints and adorned with floral motifs, they are striking works of art due to the inventiveness of the composition and to the plastic quality of the representations which require careful, patient attention in order to be decoded. They shared common features both in Wallachia and Moldavia. Most often than not they were the work of local masters who — at the beginning at least — used as models the hand crosses from Mount Athos. Few names of masters — priest Nechifor, for instance, who carved a cross in 1599, Dosoftei "coming from Putna" (1561), or priest Ilia (1593) — have come down to us. Nevertheless, their crosses mark a specific artistic genre whose inventiveness can also be accounted for by the influence of mural paintings of the time.

For almost twenty-five years after the death of Stephen the Great in 1504, owing to the confusion caused by the struggle for power between the boyars' factions, we know very little about the activity of the school of painting in Moldavia. In Wallachia instead, reigning princes like Radu the Great or Neagoe Basarab offered many painters the opportunity to assert themselves. Tîrgoviște, the capital of the country, was to become the prestigious centre of a powerful school of painting. Written documents attest that in 1515, on Neagoe Basarab's commission, masters *Dobromir* of Tîrgoviște, *Jitian* and *Stanciu* were adorning "with paints and gold" the church of the Dealu monastery. In 1519 the same Dobromir, together with *Dumitru* and *Chirtop* were commissioned to paint the Bistrița monastery in the northeast of Oltenia. A few years later Dobromir was at the head of the team of master painters who were decorating the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeș.

The oldest work known to have been painted by Dobromir is an icon representing St. Nicholas, dated to 1517, the year when the church at Argeș was dedicated. Standing out against a gold background, the saintly figure is drawn with a firm hand as wearing a garment with flat folds, thus evincing an obvious inclination towards graphism. The lower part of the icon is taken up by the votive painting of the voivode's family — Neagoe, his wife Despina, and their six children. This is the earliest icon in Romania to insert a votive painting.

The earliest body of murals of the epoch preserved to this day was accomplished during 1520—1522 by one of Dobromir's apprentices, and decorates the chapel of the infirmary at the Bistrița Monastery. The traditional features were retained, recalling in places the paintings in the narthex of the church of Cozia. The cold, subdued colouring and the incisive, powerfully suggestive line, give these murals an austere grandeur of a pronounced monastic character. In contrast to it is the votive painting representing the great boyar Barbu Craiovescu (who had taken holy orders under the name of Pahomie) which arrests the onlooker's attention through its realistic character and the pleasure of observation. Rejecting the conventionalism of a "ceremonial" portrait, the painter has executed it in subtle, delicate lines, with the chromatic tones following each form with great accuracy.

The murals in the naos of the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeș were completed in 1526, thanks to prince Radu of Afumați, Neagoe Basarab's son-in-law. Following the clumsy, unhappy restoration works conducted by Lecomte de Noüy in the 19th century, only separate figures (nowadays at the Art Museum of Romania) have been preserved from the great mural ensemble. Bearing the stamp of "ceremonial" art with an obvious stress on the sumptuous ornamental elements, the figures of reigning princes in the votive painting which had decorated the necropolis situated in the pronaos, demonstrate the historic importance of the founder and exceed by far the usual function of the portraits of donors. In this respect, it is significant that the votive paintings also contain the portraits of the Serbian prince Lazarus and of Mircea the Old meant to remind of the traditional anti-Ottoman struggle.

It is almost certain that this genealogical painting was devised by Prince Neagoe Basarab himself, the scholar whose work *Book of Advice to My Son Teodosie* was to become a genuine political testament, always present in the thinking 16th century. The votive painting coming from Argeș is also important due to the fact that it portrays a large number of princes and princesses in an ample gallery of portraits, rendered in an unexpectedly lay manner. Its demonstrative ceremonial character is obvious both in the solemn attitudes of the portrayed and in their rich attire depicted in detail so as to emphasize their acknowledged authority. The presence of the bicephalous eagle on the knees of Mircea the Old and on the hem of Neagoe Basarab's mantle was meant as a heraldic argument to remind that the Romanian princes were considered to be successors of the Byzantine emperors.

The icons donated by princess Despina to the Serbian monastery of Krušedol also prove the flourishing of painting at the time of Neagoe Basarab. They were made by Romanian painters, a fact recently confirmed by Yugoslav specialists. A large number of embroideries to be found at some monasteries at Mount Athos and in Serbia, as well as in the museums of Moscow and Belgrade, attest the rich production of cartoons made no doubt by the same master painters of the school in Tîrgoviște. Of noble beauty is the *dvera* (altar screen) of Argeș (1517), an impressive monumental composition of contained dramatism. The same applies to the *epitrachilion* of Bistrița (1521) the lower part of which represents Barbu Craiovescu and his wife, small realistic portraits in fact, in which we can once more detect the interest the master painters of Tîrgoviște took in rendering the human face.

The most impressive work in the entire group of paintings which have come down to us from this epoch is an icon representing the *Descent from the Cross*, today at the Art Museum of Romania. The traditional theme — the

grieving Madonna holding the lifeless body of Jesus — is reiterated in the lower left hand corner, where princess Despina is shown in deep mourning holding her son Teodosie who had died young after a brief reign (1521). The grief of the two mothers is powerfully underlined by the chromatic harmonies heightened by touches of black. Indeed, not even in the Italy of the Renaissance had the artists dared compare the human sorrow with the divine one.

The epoch of Prince Neagoe Basarab with its broad horizon, its aspirations to freedom and culture, its understanding of human values whose observance had become a programme in the princes's work *Book of Advice to My Son Teodosie* — can be compared in fact to the Renaissance, even though its stylistic forms are different from those of the great cultural and artistic moment prevailing in Western Europe. After Neagoe Basarab's death and the assassination of his successor Radu of Afumați by the boyars in 1529, the school of painting in Wallachia entered a period of temporary eclipse.

Instead, the art of painting enjoyed a period of revival in Moldavia. Dobrovăț (Iași county), a monument decorated with paintings in 1529, inaugurated the splendid suite of murals completed during the reign of Petru Rareș. The murals are impressive in their austere chromatics, in the introspective air of physiognomies, and in the profound state of meditation they manage to communicate. The unity in point of the characters' attitudes is all the more surprising as it is the result of the joint work of at least three master painters.

The votive painting is quite impressive owing to the solemn bearing of the personages as well as to the royal splendour of their attire. More severe, the paintings in the burial vault are by the hand of a master whose formation is reminiscent of the Byzantine-Balkan monastic painting. The iconographic programme here contributes a new element, the representation of the *synaxarion*, a sort of illustrated calendar which was to become very popular with Moldavian painting.

The icongraphy of the pronaos is very original; it must have been devised by some of the most prominent Moldavian scholars of the epoch. The grouping together of the scenes was particularly significant for the people of the time as they symbolically suggested the entire Orthodox East fallen under the domination of the Ottomans. The scenes are set in three key-regions of the Orthodox tradition, i.e. Sinai, Mount Athos and Jerusalem, all three of them under Turkish rule at the time. The idea of the struggle for freedom is enhanced by the presence in the composition of the soldier saints on horseback, who were to hold a place of honour in the works of the Moldavian painters from then on. Thus, the pronaos of Dobrovăț can be viewed as a manifesto of the resistance against the Turks, comparable with the call to a new crusade depicted by the *Procession of the Soldier Saints* painted at the church of Pătrăuți founded by Stephen the Great.

In 1530, Petru Rareș adorned the St. George's Church in Hîrlău, his native place, with interior and exterior frescoes. The church was the chapel of the princely residence, and therefore its murals were the actual iconographic and decorative standards the prince favoured. The Oecumenic Synods were depicted with particular care on the walls of the pronaos as they were a symbol of the struggle for the purity of faith in a century when the Reformation was causing many blood-shedding conflicts. We must stress the interest of the principal master painter in the compositions with large groups

whose gestures and movements are decorative rather than dramatic; his taste for the decorative is easily perceptible in the delight he took when rendering the vestments.

Although the exterior frescoes of St. George's Church in Hîrlău are known only from photographs for clumsy restoration works destroyed them completely in the 19th century, they are of great importance for art history yet. Covering all the façades of the princely chapel, they had a very clear iconographic composition including all the themes to be met in the subsequent monuments with painted façades.

Thus, starting with the very first monument with painted façades of Petru Rareș's epoch, the exterior frescoes can be said to have had a coherent programme which was to be reiterated, with few interpretations, at all the subsequent monuments. Therefore, it is quite natural to asssume that such an initiative could only have been prepared and devised by the scholars at the court of the prince.

The exterior frescoes in Moldavia prompted many controversies with regard to their origin. Art historians of great prestige in Europe argued, though unconvincingly, in support either of an Iranian origin (Josef Strzygowski), of an influence from Trapezund (Talbot Rice), or of a Byzantine-Balkan origin (André Grabar). However, as has been demonstrated subsequently, it is not the idea of having the façades decorated with murals that is so very important, for painted ornaments, under various forms, can be traced all over mediaeval Europe; what is important indeed is the fact that nowhere else can we find edifices *entirely* decorated with exterior frescoes that make *a consistent iconographic programme* for several decades. Exterior paintings dating from the 14th and 15th centuries are numerous enough in Transylvania and Moldavia, but they are all separate panels or decorations devoid of a precise iconographic programme.

The work of the iconographers and painters at the time of Petru Rareș is all the more striking as the world renown the Moldavian exterior frescoes enjoy is justified by their lofty artistic beauty. Almost untouched by the passage of time, the colours have preserved their brilliance conveying the same intact message of beauty.

After the decoration of the princely chapel in Hîrlău, the main achievement of the school of painting in Moldavia were the frescoes at the church of the Probota Monastery. Despite subsequent retouches, the interior frescoes at Probota are of great artistic value owing to thier rich iconography and to the virtues of both composition and details. It is for the first time that *the Last Judgement* appears in the porch, executed in the same manner as the similar scene painted in the dining hall of the Lavra Monastery at Mount Athos (1513). In perfect harmony with the many surfaces of the architecture of the porch is the composition dominated by the register of the Zodiac; at Probota, it covers the entire vault, and makes an ensemble of unparalleled beauty in point of organization.

Seriously damaged by the passage of time, the façades of Probota preserve only traces of their initial decoration, enough however to enable us to "decode" its iconographic programme and to assess the quality of both composition and drawing. Near the entrance of the porch there is the portrait of abbot Grigorie Roșca, a great scholar whom art historian Petru Comarnescu was right to consider the author of the iconographic programme characteristic of the exterior frescoes at the time of Petru Rareș.

The paintings decorating St. George's Church in Suceava (1534) are ample compositions of a robust monumentality never met before. The unusually large scenes were designed so as to suit the ample proportions of the monument which facilitated the execution of complex compositions with numerous personages while strictly preserving, however, the significance of the biblical narrative. The scenes from the Christological cycle are highly expressive. Professor Virgil Vătășianu has rightly remarked that there are certain correspondences — in point of expression and programme — between these paintings and the ones in the princely church of Curtea de Argeș; this again confirms how rewarding the artistic relations with Wallachia were.

The church of the Humor Monastery is the earliest monument whose well preserved murals enable us to assess the high artistic level the school of painting in Moldavia had attained during the reign of Petru Rareș. In 1535, a team of craftsmen headed by *Toma of Suceava*, one of the most important Romanian artists of the epoch, was commissioned to adorn with frescoes the church the high chancellor Teodor Bubuiog had founded. As he called himself "painter of Suceava, courtier of the greatly revered voivode Petru of Moldavia", Toma must have already become the head of a workshop; thus we can imagine him supervising the decoration works at the church of Humor, and painting the most important parts of the compositions himself.

Faithfuf to the traditional iconographic programme, the frescoes in the naos and the altar form more dynamic compositions than before, while the range of feelings they express is much more varied. In compositions such as *The Carrying of the Cross* we can find echoes of the ceremonial processions in which the nobility of the time took part. The composition on the pronaos vault with the Holy Mother in the center surrounded by archangels and prophets, is of rare harmony.

In order to decorate the façades of the monument, Toma of Suceava had to solve some very difficult problems. Firstly, he had to represent with utmost clarity the iconographic programme worked out by the court; with its numerous scenes and figures it threatened to destroy the unity of the façade, and thus diminish the monumental character of the architecture. On the other hand, he had to find the suitable means of expression able to secure the unity of the murals. By employing as the dominant tone a brick-red colour subtly and gently modulated, and by creating a rhythmical link between the images, Toma achieved the unity of the façades, turning the coloured mantle of the frescoes into a real architectural decor which enhances the beauty of the monument's built forms.

The walls of the porch are mostly reserved for *The Last Judgement*, a composition which can be seen from the outside too, owing to the wide arcades of the open porch. The façade of the pronaos is taken up by the 24 stanzas of the *Hymnos Akatistos* under which there is an ample representation of the *Siege of Constantinople*. In illustrating the introductory stanza of the *Hymn*, the *Siege of Constantinople* refers to the year 626 when the Persian armies besieged the capital of the Byzantine Empire. As legend has it, emperor Heraclius defeated the Persians with the help of a miraculous icon of the Holy Virgin. However, the painter of Humor did not observe the letter of the Hymn, and replaced the Turks for the Persians. The Turks were portrayed as wearing costumes of the painter's time, stones being hurled at them from the sky. Many researchers have demonstrated the significance of this image meant to keep alive, for all the Romanians, the hope in a possible victory over the Turks who were continually threatening the freedom of the

country. On the southern wall there is a detailed illustration of the life of St. Nicholas who was considered to be the defender of the Orthodox faith and of the cult of the Holy Mother. As it was the time when the Reformation was contesting the cult of Virgin Mary, as well as of all the saints, the emphasis laid on the legend of St. Nicholas had a clear significance. Thus it is not surprising at all to find it reiterated at almost all the monuments with exterior frescoes in Moldavia. The same as at Hîrlău or Probota, the eastern part of the church is covered with frescoes representing the *Prayer of All Saints*. In a vast procession arranged on several levels saints of all categories, headed by the protectors of Moldavia, are seen walking towards the central axis of the altar. This impressive display of personages was interpreted as an invocation to save Moldavia from the Ottoman threat, a mobilizing and encouraging image for the contemporaries. We should also note that the elaboration of such an iconographic theme — the greatest and most complex *prayer* in the entire Christian iconography — is one more proof of the maturity and courage of the cultural milieu in Moldavia at the time of Petru Rareș.

The painter's excellence in the use of colours, the lively, elegant line, the cultivated typology of the personages, the perfect harmony between details and the whole, are all qualities which make Toma, the painter of Humor, not only a great artist of the time of Petru Rareș, but also a brilliant representative of Romanian painting in general.

The frescoes adorning the princely foundation of Moldovița can be related to the workshop of Toma of Suceava as well. While preserving the essential features of the iconographic programme of Humor, the painters who adorned Moldovița realized that the grandeur of the edifice required a more sumptuous decoration, a more brilliant colour scheme. Using with perfect skill powerful tones and sonorous harmonies, the master painters of Moldovița — under the guidance of Toma we believe — created a festive pictorial ensemble which conveys a clear iconographic programme.

Other remarkable murals can be seen decorating the church of the Dormition in the town of Baia, at St. Demetrios' in Suceava, at the church in the village of Părhăuți and the church of the former Coșula Monastery (Botoșani county).

The school of painting in Moldavia during the reign of Petru Rareș was to demonstrate once again its power of renewal in 1541, when the church founded by the powerful boyar Luca Arbore in the village of Arbore was decorated. The murals were executed by a trem of painters headed by Dragoș, the son of priest Coman of Iași. Although the edifice stood roofless for a long time, the interior frescoes are well preserved. Those covering the western façade, protected by a large arcade, are surprisingly fresh, while the murals on the southern and eastern façades can still be clearly distinguished entirely.

Faithful to the traditional iconographic programme, the paintings of the naos are striking in their varied composition, in the manner the space is suggested and particularly in the rich ornaments on the vestments. Brocades, embroideries, innumerable pearls produce a striking plastic effect owing to their execution in slight relief. By resorting to a mixed technique — the frescoes with finishing touches painted *in secco* — and by using an excellent binder, the master painter was able to use a peculiar brushwork characteristic of oil painting, consisting of superimposed, thick layers of paint, never to be found in mural paintings before. In the pronaos, an important place is

held by a brightly coloured procession of women martyrs. This composition can be attributed to another master that favoured a more popular canon of beauty with fuller, more vigorous forms.

On the southern façade we find again the *Hymnos Akatistos* and the *Siege of Constantinople*. Yet this time, the siege was executed in keeping with history and described the fight with the Persians in AD 636. On the southern façade again, where the naos stands, there is an impressive representation of *The Last Judgement*, a composition of large dimensions, the centre of interest of the entire iconographic programme. Among the sinners we recognize the Western Catholics and Protestants alongside the Turks and Tartars — the enemies of Moldavia — whose costumes are rendered with the exact proficiency of an expert. The western wall carries the illustrations of the *Genesis* and of the *Legends* of Saints George, Demetrios, Nichita and Paraskeva, eighty-five scenes in all, each of them a masterpiece in point of composition, graphic interpretation and chromatic harmony. Adapted to the requirements of each subject and detail, the drawing is varied, the line — now lively or nervous, now firmly incisive — constructs the figures, the draperies, the elements of the background with great precision. The personages, of a noble typology, wear western clothes mostly, which suggests one of the areas where the artist was trained. The legends of the saints contain numerous rather unusual episodes, delightful scenes and hints at court life (gatherings, feasts, cavalcades of the knights) often accompanied by humorous touches.

Dragoș Coman must have possessed rich, complex information, as revealed by both his iconographic innovations (many of them taken over from western art) and by the stylistic and formal ones (with echoes from the Italian painting and from the icons of Novgorod). The Belgian art historian Paul Philippot considered Dragoș Coman to be a real Pisanello of Moldavia and the greatest artist of the Orthodox East in the 16th century.

The murals decorating the chapel of Bistrița monastery — enlarged by Petru Rareș in 1541 — reveal the deep response of the painter to ornamental, elegant forms and varied dynamic compositions. The chapel in the bell-tower is painted with detailed scenes from the life of St. John the New of Suceava, who was tormented by the Tartars in the 13th century. After his relics were brought to Suceava at the time of Alexander the Kind (A.D. 1402), the saint began to be revered in Moldavia as the protector of the country.

In the year 1547, Grigore Roșca, the former abbot of Probota, who had meanwhile become the Metropolitan of Moldavia, was supervising the painting of the façades of St. George's church at the Voroneț monastery founded by Stephen the Great. A porch had been built on the western side of the church. Its windowless, compact western wall shows the intention of the donor to have it painted with *The Last Judgement*. This composition with its vast dimensions and wealth of details is a unique work of art both in old Romanian painting and in the art of the entire European East.

Attributed to envoy Marcu, the murals at Voroneț stand out against an intensely brilliant blue background, which secures the unity of the composition and highlights the architectural forms. In point of iconographic programme there is a single very important innovation on the southern façade: the representation of the legend of St. John the New of Suceava. Drawing his inspiration from the scenes decorating the coffin containing the saint's relics the painter made masterful use of the expressive colouring in order to enliven the hagiographic legend and make its episodes easy to understand.

Thus the legend of the saint who had been tortured by the Tartars became a call to fight against the predatory enemies of Moldavia.

The centre of the great frescoes of Voroneț, in point of composition and psychology, is *The Last Judgement.*

As organized with utmost clarity, the composition consists of groups of well individualized characters, which makes it possible to grasp the significance of each episode. The upper band pictures the vault of heaven and the signs of the zodiac. The following band describes the heavenly court with Jesus as a judge in the centre, flanked by the Virgin and by St. John the Baptist, and farther on by the apostles and by groups of angels. The third band shows the *Hetimatia* (the *Empty Throne*) towards which Adam and Eve direct their prayers; from the symbolic right side come the hosts of the devout Christians, while on the left the sinners are grouped, the Turks and Tartars among them. On the lower part there is *the River of Fire*, into which the sinners have been hurled, *the Rising from the Dead*, *the Scales of Justice*, *the Death of the Virtuous* and *the Death of the Sinner*, and *the Citadel of Paradise* towards which the hosts of sinners are led by Apostle Peter. In all this ensemble with its many episodes, scores of groups and hundreds of figures, it is the compact group of sinners portraying the enemies of Moldavia that attracts our attention. Splendidly characterized typologically through their pompous attire and big turbans, the Turks are depicted as the principal convicted sinners of *The Last Judgement* at Voroneț, a fact clearly revealed by the composition and by the means of expression. This is a straight forward anti-Ottoman message, a loud call to fight for the liberation of the country.

Although no monograph has yet been devoted to the painting of icons, the ones painted during the reign of Petru Rareș are known owing to several works of great value. At a time when the school of Cretean icon-markers — predominant in the Balkan-Aegean area — favoured a mannerist ideal of beauty, in Moldavia the icons preserved the power of expression of traditional models, being more human in character, and mirroring the society's aspirations towards liberty. The most characteristic icons, with their gentle calligraphy and warm colouring, perfectly match the mural paintings in point of style.

Thanks to the close ties between Moldavia and Transylvania where Petru Rareș possessed vast fiefs, many icons can be found today in the Transylvanian churches and monasteries, and even in the village churches as far away as the distant county of Hunedoara. Another important reflex of Moldavian painting in Transylvania is the mural decoration on the façade of the Evangelical Church in Dîrlos, a monument of the Late Gothic. The stylistic features trace the murals to the Romanian painting of a time when Petru Rareș's authority was acknowledged in the region of the two Tîrnava rivers, the Saxon area included.

In Wallachia, the painting centres did not fare very well due to the innumerable Ottoman invasions and frequent changes of reigning princes. However, in 1537, the beautiful frescoes in the church of Stănești, north of Oltenia, were painted. Their author was probably *Dumitru*, one of the assistants of Dobromir of Tîrgoviște. The paintings benefit from a rich iconographic programme, their drawing is vigorous, their colouring warm. The artist's real gift for featuring is obvious mainly with the votive painting with its beautifully-rendered period garments. Still, all this cannot conceal a certain

clumsiness in organizing the more complex scenes. One can notice however, the characteristic tendency of the school of painting in Wallachia to break away from the conventional canons in order to give full attention to the human face.

In 1542—1543, the paintings adorning the Chapel of the infirmary at the Cozia Monastery were commissioned by Prince Radu Paisie to master *David* and his son *Radoslav*. The painters seem to have had a first-hand knowledge of the world south of the Danube, whence they took over some iconographic variants. The votive painting is clearly inspired by the one executed by Dobromir at Curtea de Argeș. Yet the portrait of Spatharus Stroe, who supervised the whole work, is highly impressive because of truthful rendering: nothing is conventional or flattering, the drawing faithfully presents the man's features suggesting his spiritual qualities, his energy and his power as a high official. This image is not only an invaluable document. It also anticipates the art of the portrait as it is to be found in later Wallachian realistic painting.

The frescoes in the Chapel of the infirmary at the Cozia Monastery are characterized by the clear organization of the composition and the sure-handed distribution of surfaces, by a vigorous line and variety of chromatic harmonies. The painters used a rich colour scheme, with numerous nuance of warm or cold greys dominated by earthen red enhanced with touches of white which give it a sparkling brilliance.

The murals at Snagov, dating from 1563, though renewed, offer an important landmark with regard to the aspirations and artistic resources in Wallachia during the troubled times of the Ottoman domination. Donated by Prince Petru the Young (1559—1568), they make the largest iconographic ensemble preserved of the 16th century Wallachia. It is quite impressive in its striking adaptation to the architectural surfaces, in the noble attitude of the personages and in the complexity of its programme. The rich iconography did not deter the authors of the frescoes who managed a clear and expressive distribution of all the elements in a composition which allows for a grasp of the biblical scenes. The typology of the personages, of Hellenistic elegance, is admirably served by the fluid line and the delicately modulated chromatic harmonies. The master painter of Snagov must have been a disciple of the school of Tîrgoviște which was reaching full maturity at the time.

Another disciple of the same school was, no doubt, the author of the paintings in the pronaos of the church of the Tismana Monastery. The frescoes were painted in 1564 by *Dobromir* of Tîrgoviște, also called "the Young" in order to distinguish him from the older master by the same name. The artist's task was to decorate the interior of a very tall hall, with tens of images arranged in rows one upon the other, which he managed into a coherent ensemble. Its monumental decorative unity is secured by the continuous flow of the compositional rhythm ebbing from one scene to the other, and by the correct distribution of the chromatic accents. The tiny images of the *Calendar* display the great inventiveness of the painter; they stand out due to the expressive, never-repeated gestures of the characters, and to the multitude of scenes which make up an ample composition that perfectly matches the monumental character of the edifice.

After Petru Rareș's death, in Moldavia the focal school of painting went through a period of decline. The only important work of the time was the mural decorating the pronaos of the Voroneț Monastery (1550).

A change for the better occurred as Prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu came to the throne. He was highly interested in arts and therefore he commissioned painters and brought over high-quality paints from Venice. His generous donations made it possible to reconstruct and decorate with paintings the new Catholicon of the Dochiariu Monastery at Mount Athos, as well as the Moldavian church in Lvov. Of a great beauty are the paintings in the Episcopal Church of Roman. They follow the tradition of Petru Rareș's epoch in point of iconographic organization and stylistic expression. Their main characteristics are the narrative verve and the beauty of the landscapes in the background of the icons, which introduce elements of perspective. One of the paintings, *St. Nicholas Stopping the Sea Storm*, is a genuine sea-scape of a striking realism: a caravel, her sails billowing in the wind, is tossed about by waves on a background possibly inspired by the Bosphorus straits. The caravel is so accurately drawn that one may rightly wonder whether the artist had been a traveller himself. Anyway, a new tendency is obvious, i.e. that of renewing the art of painting by familiarizing it with the innovations of Western painting or at least with those of the Cretean art which was bridging the Eastern and Western trend during the 16th century.

Besides the frescoes in the church of the Rîșca Monastery (partially preserved), the documents recording the existence of frescoes on the façades of some buildings in the town of Hîrlău describing contemporary battle scenes are also worth mentioning.

Of the numerous icons of the period, special attention deserve the ones painted in Moldavia and preserved in the churches in Transylvania as they attest the uninterrupted relationships between the Romanian countries on the two sides of the Carpathians. Icons which were most certainly executed by master painters trained in Moldavia can be found as far away as the centre of Transylvania (the triptychs of Agîrbiciu and Bica — Cluj county; the icons of Urisiu — Mureș county) and even farther away to the North, in Maramureș.

The last decades of the 16th century meant an extremely complex period in the development of the Byzantine tradition painting in the Romanian countries. The cultural and artistic confluences, often favoured by dynastic alliances as well, combined with the mutations in the social and political life to create an ambience of relative unity in which individual accents are easy to distinguish. Closer ties with the Western world achieved by such rulers like Petru Cercel, a truly Renaissance prince, or Alexandru Lăpușneanu, who had himself travelled in Italy, as well as the closer relations with Poland, increased the gusto for a luxurious court life of aristocratic brilliance, no doubt eclectic in taste yet in this all the more open to renewals.

Quite significantly, the social status of painters improved during this period. Thus, a painters' guild was set up at Suceava in 1570. A little later, Toma Turbulea of Transylvania became the official painter of Stephen Bathory, king of Poland (1576—1586), who even knighted him. During the same period, itinerant painters — Greek especially — travelled all through the Romanian countries in search of commissions; together with the representatives of the focal schools of painting and with those of provincial or even rustic formation, they contributed to the great diversity of the artistic scenery of the time.

The mentality of the epoch is documented by the murals decorating the church of the Căluiu Monastery (Olt county) founded by the Buzescu boyars. The mural paintings executed in 1594 command attention due to the unusual-

ly important place the votive painting holds in a church founded by a boyar. As a matter of fact, the lower part of the pronaos is taken up by the imposing portraits of the Buzescu family headed by brothers Radu, Preda and Stroe, famous captains of Michael the Brave's armies. The solemn, pround bearing of the portrayed and their rich attire grant the votive painting at Căluiu the value of an act of political authority. The ambitious desire of the grand aristocracy to assert themselves — a rampant phenomenon in many European countries at the time, and closer to us in Poland — can be perceived here too; as such it alters (and even vies with) the traditional iconographic programme. Equally significant is the homage brought to Michael the Brave and Petru Cercel by having them portrayed in the naos as wearing garments of Western fashion. Which is all the more relevant when considering the fact that for the whole rest of the church master painter Mina has faithfully followed the usual iconographic programme.

Despite the iconographic and stylistic differences, the frescoes in the curch of the Sucevița Monastery in the north of Moldavia share some of the features of Căluiu murals completed only one year before. As it came by the throne of Moldavia through one of its scions, Ieremia Movilă, the grand boyar family of Movilești felt the need to display its power by adorning the family foundation with a brilliancy never encountered before. Therefore, the votive painting at Sucevița, similar in manner to that of Căluiu, is an ample, obviously demonstrative composition, meant to outline the high rank and the ambitions of the Movilă family.

The murals at Sucevița bring to a close a long-lasting process of evolution and mark a new, equally important stage in the development of painting. Their main authors, the master painters Ioan and Sofronie (whose icons can be found in other churchs in Moldavia as well), were natives of the place, no doubt. This accounts for their thorough knowledge of the traditional iconographic patterns as well as for the presence of specific local elements in the rendering of costumes and in the treatment of landscapes. However, at a time when contacts with Western and Russian art were so frequent, it was natural for their works to reflect the most comprehensive tendencies of the time. Standing out against a dark green background, the frescoes of Sucevița evince an exceptional command of equilibrium, a sure sense of the relation between volumes, surfaces and chromatic values, and also a rare inventiveness in point of composition and range of types.

The mural decoration of the interior walls is faithful to the tradition; yet it enriches it with new episodes, some of them of a subtle, refined quality. Besides *The Last Judgement*, the porch also comprises a detailed illustration of the legend of St. John the New. It culminates in the ample scene which describes *The Carrying of the Saint's Relics* to Suceava and shows Alexander the Kind welcoming them. This was a good opportunity for the painter to describe a sumptuous procession with highly and sugestively individualized personages.

On the outside, the monument is enveloped as it were in a multicoloured mantle. The dark green tint that dominates the background makes all the other colours sparkle like gems. The eastern and western walls retain the traditional iconography although in *The Tree of Jesse* special attention is given to the ancient Greek philosophers. However, the composition most characteristic of Sucevița is *The Ladder of John of Sinai* , which covers the northern exterior walls of the pronoas and of the burial vault. With a perfect

sense of the contrasts, the artist opposed the harmonious movement of the hosts of angels — an unparalleled group in mediaeval painting in point of grandeur and perfection — to the disorderly movements of sinners falling into the clutches of the demons.

The frescoes at the Sucevița Monastery reveal the pround attitude of the founders, a noble family of boyars with a firm desire to keep their authority as rulers, which they actually succeeded for several decades in Moldavia, and even in Wallachia, though for a short time.

Yet the true hero of the close of the century, the one who put an indelible mark on the epoch thus changing the entire course of the Romanian history, culture and art, was Michael the Brave. The great victories he won against the Turks and other enemies who coveted to encroach upon the liberty of the Romanian countries, made of Michael the Brave a legendary figure. He succeeded in bringing the three Romanian principalities under his sceptre, thus creating a unified Romania for the first time in history. The great union he was able to achieve can be even better understood with the help of the data provided by his activity as a founder of churches.

Like all the great sponsors of the art in the epoch, Michael the Brave surrounded himself with painters such as *Mina*, *Nicholas* of Crete and Petru. Not only were they commissioned to decorate his monuments, but they were also entrusted with important diplomatic missions abroad.

The fragments of paintings rediscovered recently in the chapel of the citadel in Tîrgu Mureș are the only evidence of the large number of similar works of art with which the prince endowed the churches he founded in Transylvania. Nicolae Iorga established that a votive painting representing Michael the Brave, had existed in the district of Șchei in Brașov in St. Nicholas' Church, a monument which for many decades had become one of the centres of spiritual life of the three Romanian countries. It is also probable that the churches in Făgăraș, Ocna Sibiului, Rîmnețț, Lujeriu, Bîrsău, Galda de Jos — built a few decades earlier, some of them by princes living south of the Carpathians — were decorated during Michael the Brave's reign.

In the 16th century, the paintings designed for the Roman-Catholic congregations in Transylvania were quite complex in that they were influenced by the Gothic on the one hand and by Renaissance on the other. The rather obsolete forms of the Gothic were still kept in small mural compositions and in polyptych altars, even though echoes of the Renaissance could already be perceived everywhere; actually ever since the previous century in Transylvania Renaissance had enjoyed the support of many important patrons of art, Matthew Corvinus one of the most prominent. The transposition for instance, of an architectural decoration into fresco is significant since while still employing a Gothic morphology it already betrays a Renaissance attitude towards ornamentation (St. Mary's Chapel in Mediaș). The scenes illustrating the legend of St. George which decorate the northern nave of the "Church on the hill" in Sighișoara reveal the powerful influence of the Renaissance in the variant of the German school with which the Gothic traits were still strong.

Attributed to the initiative of bishop Varday (1514—1524), the figures of saints decorating the northern apse of the Cathedral in Alba Iulia seem to be an emanation of Tuscan painting, the plastic quality of the drawing and the colour pattern being arguments in favour of this.

An extremely interesting mural ensemble covers the vaults of the choir and apse in the Protestant Church of Daia (eastern Transylvania). Dating

from the first quarter of the 16th century the fresco has an exclusively ornamental character, consisting of whirling plant motifs with escutcheons painted among their complicated meanderings. The pre-eminently lay aspect of this type of ornament, quite natural in a manor house but unusual for a church, is to be related to the mutations occurring in the artistic conception of the time. It anticipated the coffered ceilings which were soon to appear.

While in the previous century most of the polyptych altars in Transylvania were painted by foreign masters, coming from Austria mainly, early in the 16th century local workshops were set up. In a short time they became perfectly able to deal with the commissions given by the town or village communities. The various altarpieces preserved to this day were all eclectic in style bearing numerous resemblances to the Gothic painting of South Germany, which the local painters probably came to know through engravings. The style of the Renaissance is hardly perceptible and that only in the chromatic range, in the way landscape elements are employed and in the suggestion of depth.

An important group of polyptychs have been preserved in the area of the Tîrnave rivers, in the centre of Transylvania. Beyond their specific traits, they were all clearly influenced by Veit Stoss' style, their wide spread in Poland, Bohemia, Franconia and Transylvania being often pointed out by specialists.

The altarpiece in the church of Beia, near Brașov, dated 1512, is the oldest polyptych of this group. When open, it depicts St. Ursula's legend in four episodes; when shut, eight moments of the Passion. The upper part of the panels is decorated with slightly protruding and gilt plant motifs which seem to have been inspired by brocades. The architectural elements of the background directly refer to the Italian architecture which the master must have got acquainted with through engravings. The rich costumes, some of them Polish by fashion, together with the eclectic style recall the school of Veit Stoss; the altarpiece has been attributed, in general, to one of this master's direct descendants, Johannes probably.

Johannes and his assistant *Christian*, were the authors of several polyptych altars in the same style, all of them in the counties of Brașov and Sibiu. Sometimes they reveal the impact of Dürer's engravings, some other times the influence of the altarpiece in St. Margaret's Curch of Mediaș, painted towards the end of the 15th century. Vincentius "Cibiniensis" (of Sibiu) was another great artist who ever since the year 1500 had begun working out polyptychs in collaboration with his father-in-law, sculptor *Simion*. Vincentius evinced a better understanding of anatomy, his nudes being convincingly rendered in point of form and muscle through a nervous line of the drawing and a vivid colouring scheme. Certain details of the physiognomies allow for the painter's possible acquaintance with of Lucas Cranach's works whereof he may have also adopted a certain exuberance in arranging the vestments. Worth mentioning are also the altarpieces of the Evangelical churches in Tatîrlana, Cincu, Cisnădie (today at the Brukenthal museum in Sibiu).

The large polyptych altar in the Evangelical Church of Sebeș, near Alba Iulia, dated to 1518—1526, was the work of an artist belonging to the Danube school, who nevertheless made a skilful use of elements taken over from Dürer's engravings. The rich backgrounds of the compositions highlight the artist's obvious command of geometrical perspective, both with the interiors and with the landscapes.

After 1530, the Reformation caused the number of painted or carved sacred images decrease dramatically. Nevertheless a post-Reform altarpiece of large dimensions is still to be found at Hălchiu (Brașov county). It depicts the Passion and the martyrdom of four apostles in an eclectic vision, yet proper to the Renaissance. Other altars, dating from 1530 to 1550, have been preserved in the Szeckler churches of eastern Transylvania. As painted by local masters, apart from their eclectic character, they evince a pronounced provincial aspect which can account for a certain return to the forms of the Late Gothic.

Embroidery held an important place in the artistic creations of the Romanian countries. An original style had emerged in Moldavia, characterized by monumentality and a noble moral significance, the traditional forms nevertheless maintaining their authority. However, just like with rural painting, the employment of images became prevalently decorative. At the end of the century, during the reign of the Movilă dynasty, images became highly stylized, their main feature being the ceremonial convention. During the early 16th century, in Wallachia the art of embroidery developed extensively thanks to the protection culture enjoyed under the rule of princes Radu the Great and Neagoe Basarab. Unfortunately, many of the embroideries created during that period are to be found all over the Orthodox East, some of them having been donated to Mount Athos or Serbian monasteries at the time, others having been acquired later on by important foreign museums. Besides certain local features, Wallachian embroideries display the same pronounced decorative character; however, votive portraits are more frequent, coming as an opportunity to introduce lay elements into liturgical compositions.

On account of its large dimensions and its iconographic composition, the *dvera* (i.e. the curtain of the royal doors to the altar) at the Putna Monastery is probably the most important piece of the whole century and, in any case, one of the most significant mediaeval embroideries of the post-Byzantine ambience. It was worked out by masters *Zosima* and *Mardare* around the year 1510. The central image, *The Dormition*, is surrounded by twelve floral medallions each of them encompassing the image of one of the towns the Apostles were preaching in when Virgin Mary's death was announced. The general organization and the iconographic programme are highly original and demonstrate once more the ability of the artistic and cultural milieu in Moldavia to create new iconographic programmes, without resorting to Byzantine prototypes. The twelve medallions occasioned some extremely expressive synthetic landscapes which suggest the possible influence of the Renaissance. Some of the plant motifs take us back to those often present in the murals at the time of Petru Rareș.

A *dvera* dating from around 1517, from the Episcopal Church of Curtea de Argeș is preserved today at the Kremlin Arms Museum in Moscow. The monumental conception and the tragical character of the image recall the embroideries of Stephen the Great's epoch. The drawing is refined and the colour range sober, with the blue, red and green of the silk threads subtly elated in the proximity of the silver ones. The portraits of princess Despina and her daughters richly attired, bear striking compositional resemblance to the murals and icons of the time.

The *dvera* donated by the Wallachian Prince Vlad Vintilă to the Cutlumus Monastery at Mount Athos (1532—1535) seems to establish a connection with the embroideries in Moldavia. Its theme is *The Tree of Life*. The portraits

of the donor, his wife Rada and their son Drăghici are embroidered at the bottom of the screen, recalling the votive paintings of Neagoe Basarab's period. The votive painting holds an important place in the composition of the two dveras donated by Prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu to the Slatina Monastery in 1561. The large piece has a very wide border made by a stalk that meanders forming 15 medallions. Each of them features one of the great Holy days of the year. The embroidery is refined and accurate, yet the tendency to render figures in miniature deprives this dvera of the monumentality of earlier pieces.

The *epitaphions*, the most important of them executed in Moldavia, belong to the same category of embroideries of large dimensions. While preserving the basic compositional structure established during the reign of Stephen the Great, the 16th century Moldavian epitaphions gradually introduced ornamental motifs, the tragical expression of the earlier pieces being replaced by a descriptive exteriorization of gestures (e.g. the *epitaphion* presented by Ieremia Movilă to the Sucevița Monastery, in 1597). The epitrachilions made in Wallachia are as important as those in Moldavia. The epitrachilion presented at the beginning of the century by Radu the Great to the Govora onastery is decorated with numerous personages and abundant elegant ornaments. The embroidery, worked in gold, silver and coloured silk threads on red silk displays a rare craftsmanship. In the epitrachilion donated by Prince Neagoe Basarab and Princess Despina to the Argeș Monastery (today at Xenofon Monastery at Mount Athos), the portraits of the prince's family recall the other votive portraits of their epoch. The votive portrait is the main element of the epitrachilion donated by the Craiovescu boyars to Bistrița-Vîlcea monastery in 1571 as well. This time, however, the portrayal is of a marked realistic character.

The introduction of the printing press — first in Wallachia, in 1508 then in Moldavia as well — and the development of important printing centres substantially reduced the number of manuscripts written with great artistry and adorned with miniatures. Under these circumstances, sumptuous manuscripts were rare enough during the 16th century. There were however notable exceptions such as the *Four Gospels* donated by Prince Alexandru II Mircea (1568—1577) and his son Mihnea (today at the Sucevița Monastery). Starting from old Byzantine-Balkan models, the manuscript is richly decorated with figures running underneath the lines of the text, doubling it like a sort of a continuous comment. The votive portrait of the two donors is recurrent among other miniatures. Towards the end of the century, the illustration of the manuscripts resorts more and more to popular forms, and plant motifs rendered realistically become prevalent. Such are the numerous manuscripts by archpriest *Ioan* of Craiova as well as the one copied and adorned by the great scholar bishop *Luca* of Buzău.

Neither in Moldavia would the 16th century manuscripts again ever reach the level of excellence they had attained in the previous century through Gavril Uric's miniatures. Several manuscripts are yet worth mentioning: the one copied and illustrated by monk *Macarie* (1529, today at the Rila Monastery in Bulgaria), the Gospel donated by Princess Elena Rareș (1551, today in the library of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem), the manuscript donated by chancellor Albotă (1569), or the one donated by chancellor Ion Golia (1575, today at the State Library in Kiev). Historian Ion Bogdan, who discovered this latter manuscript, considered it to be one of the most valuable achievements of old Romanian art.

Few of the silver or gold objects of the 16th century are still preserved: most of them have disappeared for good. There is however evidence enough that the 16th century witnessed a remarkable flourishing of the art of metalwork and that, despite the difficult historical conditions, this art was able to express the numerous mutations occurring in the artistic taste of the time. The most active workshops were the Saxon ones in Transylvania, at Sibiu, Cluj and Brașov. Smaller workshops were to be found in Bistrița, Alba Iulia, Oradea, Baia Mare, Satu Mare, Sighișoara and Mediaș. The competition between the goldsmiths' workshops often degenerated into conflicts which led to lengthy lawsuits. Some of the most wellknown masters were *Blasiu* of Bistrița, *Francisc Kepirò* of Cluj, *Simion* of Brașov — who also became the lord of Bran castle — and *Balthasar Fleischer* of Sibiu.

In Moldavia, Suceava was the most important centre where silverware was produced. The most important silversmiths were *Petre* and *Toma* (who, in 1529, were sent by Petru Rareș on a diplomatic mission to Bistrița), *Gliga* and *Ioachim*, the authors of some fine book bindings. A silversmith's workshop was at work in Târgoviște too; however, when more delicate silver objects were required, the princes of Wallachia commissioned the Saxon masters of Sibiu and Brașov. Thus for instance, they were paid the huge sum of one thousand florins for Princess Despina's crown. Ever since the beginning of the 16th century silversmiths and goldsmiths were obliged to have their hallmarks stamped on the objects they made.

Lay silverware include ceremonial dishes designed for banquets, and ornaments. The decoration of embossed goblets in Wallachia looks like coiling serpents, while in Transylvania floral motifs were preferred. The ornamentation of goblets is sumptuous and consists in fact of a combination of Gothic and Renaissance forms. The tankards, most of them in the Renaissance style, date from the 16th century mainly; mythological elements are often added to the traditional ornaments inspired by the vegetal world.

Jewels, in large numbers, combine traditional Byzantine forms with new ones; ear-rings and buckles seem to have been more responsive to the decorative innovations of the epoch. Particularly significant from this point of view is the ceremonial sword of the Magistrate of Brașov, executed by *Simion*, a goldsmith of the town, in 1549. The gilt sheath is richly decorated, in the style of the Renaissance, with the arms of the city of Brașov and the figures of Hector, Andromache and Julius Caesar, together with the inscription S.P.Q.C. (Senatus populusque coronensis).

The liturgical silver objects in Moldavia and Wallachia share numerous features on account of their use of the same Byzantine iconographic prototypes and of the frequent cultural and artistic relations between the two Romanian principalities. The book-cover of the Gospel of 1507 (today at Putna monastery) is adorned with the same scenes — *The Dormition* and *The Harrowing of Hell* — as the Wallachian book-covers of the Gospels donated by Neagoe Basarab (1517?) and by the great Court Marshal Mircea (1519). The latter ones are more elegant, with few graphic accents. Several book-covers have the portraits of the donors introduced in the compositions with liturgical themes, thus confirming the popularity votive paintings enjoyed in the iconography of Wallachia.

Although still insufficiently studied, the 16th century furniture pieces preserved to this day offer a suggestive image of furniture joinery in the Romanian countries. At the same time they point to the frequent exchanges

between these countries, which account for the assimilation of various elements and the local syntheses. The main characteristic of the older pieces is the concomitant presence of Gothic and Renaissance traits and of certain more remote echoes coming from the Near East. In this field Renaissance was quicker in leaving its mark both on forms and on decorations, the Gothic motifs playing a secondary role only.

Sometimes the meandering stalks which cover almost entirely the door folds are similar to the stone carvings on the church façades. Such is, for example, the case of the doors at the Cotmeana Monastery (Wallachia) which clearly refer to the stone motifs of the Metropolitan Church in Curtea de Argeș. Yet the Oriental elements — filtered by the mediaeval craft — together with the iconography and style of Byzantine-Balkan inspiration turn the Cotmeana doors into a genuine work of synthesis. The characteristic features of the doors of the Tazlău Monastery in Moldavia carved in 1596 prove that the process of synthesis must have lasted for more than three quarters of a century. The Renaissance and the Gothic motifs, together with the profuse decoration of the ensemble, suggest a composition of Oriental origin rather.

The names of some joiners endowed with a refined sense of form and ornament have come down to us. They are *Johannes Reychmut*, *Johannes Begler* and *Antonius*, living in Transylvania at the beginning of the century, and *Cosma*, the craftsman of the doors at the Tazlău Monastery at the end of the century.

The main workshops known due to the still extant pieces were located in Cluj, Bistrița, Sighișoara, Brașov, Suceava. The doors, pews, armchairs, all of them perfectly fit into the architecture of the edifice, never disturb the harmony of space or the mural decoration. Though at times very rich (especially in Moldavia), the decoration of the furniture is not ostentatious so that only the general shape and its well-balanced proportions are fully outlined. Ornaments in the Renaissance and Gothic styles coexist with certain Oriental echoes coming through the usual decoration of the brocades.

Attributed to the 16th century, the iconostases of Voroneț and Humor can be considered the most remarkable pieces of artistic joinery in the entire century. They look like tall walls separating the naos from the altar, and command attention owing to their gorgeous carved decoration. Their ornaments consist mainly of plant motifs and birds grouped according to the principle of symmetry and disymmetry, with obvious Oriental reminiscences in their decorative vision. Gilt all over and partially coloured (in red, blue and green), the two iconostases enhance the artistic, expressive value of the interiors of the two monuments — Voroneț and Humor —, heralding the evolution process which was to be completed in the 17th century.

Humanism and Modernity

In the summer of 1601, Michael the Brave was treacherously murdered by his enemies in the camp of Rudolph II, Emperor of Germany, on the battlefield of Turda. He left to his successors the firm belief that the union of all the Romanians was a historical requirement which needed being achieved. However, the times were not yet auspicious and the attempts some of

the princes of the three Romanian principalities made at fulfilling Michael's political will were thwarted. At the same time however, during the 17th century, the scholars and artists clearly aimed their works at preparing the fulfilment of the union by enlightening the national consciousness and by creating a cultural and artistic fund common for the Romanian countries.

Works written in Romanian, on historical topics mainly, were circulated in ever increasing numbers, thus stimulating the communication among the Romanians everywhere. In extolling the historical traditions and in striving to polish up a language understood by all, these books confirm the Romanians' awareness of their unity. Over the whole territory where Romanian was spoken, the printing shops in Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania were actively spreading works that contributed to the Romanians' better understanding of their unity of descent, of thought and of language.

In the field of artistic creation, the 17th century is characterized by an exceptional capacity to renew decorative forms which were diversified through a bold adoption of eastern and western elements in an original interpretation. However, the gradual tendency towards the Baroque of these new forms was never able to compete with the traditional structures with their constant aspiration to rigor and stable balance. Under the conditions of an aristocracy-dominated social-political regime, the display of amazing brilliance and of gorgeous ornamentation in full accord with the Baroque trends of the century were not at all surprising. Yet the authority enjoyed by certain prototypes of great significance for the local history were not to prevent the increase exchanges between the main schools of Romanian art. On the contrary, more and more elements coming from Wallachia were assimilated in Moldavia while in Transylvania Wallachian and Moldavian elements were taken over sometimes entirely.

Although they did not benefit from the programmatic means employed by scholars in rendering full unity to the Romanian language, the master-builders, sculptors and painters were contributing works of art of similar importance and significance.

The "citadel" monasteries form a comprehensive chapter of the architecture of fortifications in this century. They were more numerous in Moldavia, where they came to form a genuine defensive system capable of replacing the old frontier citadels, most of which had fallen to the Ottomans. Usually the fortified monastieres consisted of a square enclosure surrounded by tall walls provided with corner-towers and with a bell-tower on one of the sides serving to protect the gates as well. The crowning achievement of the genre was to be the formidable and beautiful ensemble of walls and towers prince Miron Barnovschi raised around the Monastery of Dragomirna in the year 1625. Stone walls almost two metres thick and ten metres high form an almost perfectly square enclosure. All along the walls massive stone arcades support the guards' passage ways, allowing the defenders to reach to the loopholes made in the upper part of the walls. The corners of the citadel are fortified with square towers. The gate-tower is on the southern side, with the monastery chapel on the ground floor and the bell room above it.

Although generally similar in features to the ones in Moldavia, the fortified monasteries in Wallachia were smaller and seldom provided with corner-towers. Special atttention was given however to the gate-tower which held the function of bell-tower as well. The fortified enceintes of the monasteries built by Prince Matei Basarab (1632—1654) are of an irregular polygonal shape closely following the terrain. One should stress upon the beauty of the

gate-towers as never before nor ever afterwards were they so finely decorated (Brebu, Strehaia, Cîmpulung, Gura Motrului etc.).

While during the 15th and 16th centuries the fortification of churches had been specific to Transylvania mainly, the 17th century saw it become ever more frequent in Moldavia and Wallachia. It expressed the need of the two principalities to defend themselves, for, during that century, as it is well-known, the Turks demanded the last fortresses still under focal rule to be de-walled.

That new defensive programme applied to the construction of churches led to a substantial reshaping of the architectural forms. In Moldavia, the combination of the traditional church forms with the strong defensive towers and with the elaborate carved or profiled decorations resulted in original edifices all the more worthy of attention as their architectural beauty left its stamp even on the immediate need of self-defence. The main fortified churches date from the reign of Prince Miron Barnovschi (1626—1629) (St. Elijah Church in the village of Toporăuți and St. John the Baptist Church in Iași) and of Prince Vasile Lupu (1634—1653) (the Church of the Holy Mother in Galați).

During the 17th century civil arhitecture was very different not only in point of its programme but also in point of its variety buildings. Indeed, civil architecture included simple town dwellings, sumptuous residential palaces, country mansions and *curiae* sometimes surrounded by fortified walls, and also residences inside monasteries or within the walls of genuine citadels. It was also in the 17th century that buildings of special design appeared, such as inns, bathrooms and kitchens. Some of them are still extant, some others are known from various documents only.

With Transylvanian towns the advantage of fortified enclosures brought over the disadvantage of the very limited building space. Hence the very strict parcelling out of homesites which compelled people build up houses with narrow façades, but stretching deep into the courtyard; a passage on the groundfloor of the house led from the street to the inner court. Two-storeyed houses made of stone or brick became more and more numerous mainly in the centre of towns. The façades were very simple; their main ornaments were the window frames which, when made of stone, took over Renaissance elements rendering them in ever more simplified forms. Unlike the Transylvanian towns, the urban structures in Moldavia and Wallachia were very loose, each house being provided with its own garden and orchard. Most of the houses were made of wood, with shingled roofs; the main streets were also paved in wood. Only the princely residences and some of the houses belonging to the gentry, as well as certain important churches and monasteries were built of brick and stone.

The great princely residences of the 17th century can be assessed only from written documents, as most of them have long been destroyed. The Princely Court of Iași which Prince Vasile Lupu rebuilt was described by chronicler Miron Costin as a fortified enclosure guarded by a tower provided with strong entrance-gates. The prince's rooms, the rooms of his wife and his family as well as the bathroom floored with marble slabs all stood within the enclosure walls. The state rooms were on the first floor of the palace and could be reached at through a terrace provided with a double staircase. The functional separation of the groundfloor from the first floor is characteristic of the other two Romanian countries as well, and the terrace with a staircase is typical of both civil and folk architecture in the hilly area.

Several foreigners travelling through Tîrgoviște left us descriptions of the Princely Court Prince Matei Basarab restored and inhabited for a long time. Their travel notes also give us details of the Metropolitan Palace, an ample two-storeyed building with a terrace, an official stairway, and a loggia on the opposite side. For quite a long time the *loggia*, as a typical Renaissance element, was believed to have been adopted only at the end of the 17th century by the Brancovan monuments. Actually the *loggia* had been known long before. Its origin can be traced back to earlier architecture in Transylvania and none the less to the 15th century Ottoman architecture. However, a possible local genesis should not be excluded either, moreover so as there is full similitude in forms and structures between the loggia and the columned terraces built in Wallachia ever since the 16th century.

The Princely Court of Bucharest known under the name of Curtea Veche (The Old Court) was also restored during the reign of Matei Basarab. It roused the admiration of many foreign travellers who referred in their notes to the large number of rooms in the four two-storeyed buildings standing on the four sides of the enclosure, to its gardens, its stone fountains and its sumptuous bathrooms.

The most important 17th century edifice of civil architecture which has come down to us is the so-called Palace of the Metropolitans in Bucharest. Erected during the second half of the century over some spacious cellars with brick vaults, the palace had a terrace with a staircase from the very beginning of its building. Initially its vaulted rooms must have been decorated with paintings, like those in the palace of Tîrgoviște.

The disappearance of town residences is partly compensated by the comparatively large number of princely houses, manor houses and mansions (*curiae*) which can still be studied in Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania. A two-storeyed guesthouse was built at the Moldovița Monastery through the good offices of Bishop Efrem (1610—1612). Made of rough-hewn stone, it has several barrel-vaulted rooms, groined vaults and vaults with penetrations, and the first storey is provided with a wooden balcony supported by stone consoles. The stone window-frames show the transition from the Gothic to the Renaissance which is actually characteristic of the whole building. The stone dwelling-house at the Dragomirna Monastery (1629) consists of a cellar, a groundfloor and a first floor; its window-frames also mark the transition from Gothic to Renaissance. The vaults of the large hall on the first floor are supported by a central pillar with the intradose decorated with stone ribs. The hall at Dragomirna served as a model for the abbots' houses at Trei Ierarhi (Three Hierarchs, 1639) and Cetățuia (1672).

In Wallachia too the principal monasteries were endowed with residences for the princes or the abbots — an opportunity to fulfill an architectural programme both functional and decorative. As a rule they have a high-ceilinged cellar with the vaults rising above the ground. The residence proper is on the first floor and the access to it is secured on an exterior stairway that leads to a terrace. Such are the house erected by Prince Matei Basarab at the Brâncoveni Monastery (Olt county); the princely residence at Plumbuita near Bucharest, built in 1647; the princely residence at the Negru Vodă Monastery in Cîmpulung; the princely house at the Brebu Monastery (Prahova county). Built of rough-hewn stone with semicircular arcades on massive rectangular pillars, the house at Brebu Monastery is much like the Moldavian country mansions as well as some Transylvanian *curiae* whose massive forms it resembles.

The princely house erected by Constantin Brâncoveanu on the precincts of Hurez Monastery (1690—1693) in the northeast of Oltenia, makes the apex of a long process of evolution. It commands attention not only by its dimensions (40 × 10 m) but also by the generous assimilation of all the elements employed so far, which suggests a definitely aulic interpretation. The high cellars have barrel-vaulted ceilings resting on the centre of arches supported by strong low and thick stone columns arranged in a line along a longitudinal axis. On the first floor there is a spacious state room separated into two by stone columns decorated with floral elements at the and at the bottom; the vaulting consists of semispherical calottes as well. An in-between hall separates the state room from the prince's rooms which are also vaulted. Two elegant terraces with arcades resting on stone columns connect the building with the exterior; a stairway with stone steps and banisters leads to these terraces. Very carefully executed, the interior decoration consisted of mural paintings in *fresco* and of stucco plant ornaments. Unlike the former massive and austere constructions, the princely residence at Hurez reveals a new architectural vision of cultivated eclecticism in keeping with the stylistic mutations of Constantin Brâncoveanu's epoch.

The manor houses of the upper aristocratie echelon form a significant chapter of civil architecture. Even before 1614 the great scholar Udriște Năsturel built an impressive residence on his estate at Hereşti, on the lower reaches of the Argeş river. The house was made entirely of smoothed stones and was designed for two families. Hence, it was built on an L-shaped plan, with two cellars, two entrances and two separate apartments. The rectangular window-frames have flat profiles with slightly receding arches above. Similar enough to those of the Late Renaissance, the window-frames are closely connected with Ottoman architecture, actually being in perfect harmony with the whole building, itself a reflection of the relations Wallachia maintained with the stonemasons' workshops in the Balkan Peninsula. These relations are illustrated, among others, by the three churches Matei Basarab founded at Vidin and Şiştov in Bulgaria. All of them were built of dressed stone and were provided with semicylindrical stone vaults.

A traveller of the time, Paul of Aleppo, son of the Patriarch of Antioch wrote that "all the boyars in Wallachia owned wonderful mansions in their villages". He admiringly described the court marshal Constantin Cantacuzino's palace at Filipeştii de Tîrg (Prahova county), noting that it was more beautiful than the buildings in towns and that it had "an elegant bathroom" lined with marble, "the water being supplied with the aid of wheels and buckets from the river", which also served to irrigate the gardens. Of remarkable historic and architectural interest is the house built at Coţofeni (Dolj county, southern Oltenia) around 1653. Two corridors crossing each other divide the rectangular plan of the house into four rooms unequal in size, all barrel-vaulted and with decorative penetrations. In keeping with the principle of an unusual symmetry, the house has two terraces with arcades and brick columns built on two opposite side. The composition is vivid and expressive, the entire building being skilfully shown to advantage by the terraces raised above the cellars by means of semicylindrical brick vaults resting on transverse ribs.

Although not yet thoroughly studied, the architecture of the boyars' manor houses in 17th century Moldavia is illustrated by several invaluable specimens: the house at Şerbeşti (Neamţ county), the manor house at Pribeşti

(Vaslui county) and the Cantacuzino-Pașcanu house in the town of Pașcani west of Iași. While differing in dimensions and number of rooms, the three buildings share as common feature the separation of the interior into two apartments that communicate through a long median hall. We should also note the never-failing presence of the terrace, a precious element of architecture that secure a link between the exterior and the interior. Many architectural features of the Moldavian manors are to be found with the boyars' houses and country mansions in Wallachia as well. Their origin is to be sought in the peasant houses of the hilly regions, whose plan and volume they develop and to which they add decorative elements typical of the eclectic style of the time.

In Transylvania, the local equivalent of the Moldavian and Wallachian manor houses are the *curiae*, sometimes also called castles. Most of the 17th century *curiae* we know of have their main façades provided with a forebody in the shape of a terrace with arcades closely resembling the mansions over the Carpathians. Built of stone and brick, their forms are massive usually; their relief decorations are achieved through brick and plaster discretely recalling various stylistic elements of the Renaissance. Unlike in Wallachia and Moldavia cellars appear but rarely.

The castel of Cetatea de Baltă (Alba county) bears unexpected resemblances in point of form to the castle of Chambord built by Francis I in the 16th century. The famous French model has reached Transylvania through German channels, which proves the receptiveness of the culture in the Romanian countries. The so-called *Magna Curia*, built by Prince Gabriel Bethlen in Deva in 1521, having been planned out as a "free residence", also reflects an important mutation occurring in the way of life at the time: the traditional seclusion behind defensive walls was being replaced by a life of ostentatious comfort which suited the ambitions of the higher aristocracy, and also put forward the humanistic principles about the aims of human life.

The most important achievement of this new architectural programme in Transylvania is the castle of Sînmiclăuș (1668—73; 1682—83). It was designed by Nicholas Bethlen, an educated man who often travelled to western countries. The fact that the castle was built by local masterbuilders can account for its perfect accordance with the local tradition and environment. It also proves that at a time when the West had already adopted the Baroque fashion, in Transylvania the forms of the Renaissance assimilated into the local vision were still alive. More conservative in the organization of space, yet powerfully marked by the Renaissance are the castles of Iernut and Criș (Mureș county) and of Medieșul Aurit (Satu Mare county).

The last two decades of the 17th century were dominated by the cultural and artistic activity of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu. Even before coming to the throne, the powerful aristocrat had built the palace of Potlogi — of which only the cellars and the chapel (1683) are still standing — and that of Mogoșoaia — of which only the chapel (1688) has been preserved. Towards the end of the century, after the princely residence at Hurez, Constantin Brâncoveanu restored and embellished the Princely Court in Bucharest, i.e. the so-called "Curtea Veche" (The Old Court). The palace was provided with a main marble stairway and with numerous arched chambers, and the throne hall was supported by a row of columns in the middle. The same elements are to be found at the princely residence of Hurez. The new Princely Court had many similar features with the Court in Iași, mainly the abundan-

ce of gardens with pavilions and artesian wells. It revealed a new mode of life, and a peculiar taste for the aristocratic splendour of the Western world.

The same taste for comfort was manifest in the way the palace of Potlogi was rebuilt. This was an important stopover place on the way from Bucharest to Tîrgoviște. In 1638 Constantin Brâncoveanu ordered a new palace and a large number of annexes to be built there. The whole ensemble was encompassed into a huge square courtyard surrounded by brick walls. The monumental entrance gates were guarded by a tower. Though closely related to the other boyars' residences of the time, the interior of the Potlogi Palace is much more complex and its ornaments are by far more elaborate. In the middle of the façade overlooking the courtyard there is a terrace with a stairway. Its stone columns with composite capitals and balustrades decorated with floral and heraldic elements — in fretwork or carved — point to the discrete, never ostentatious assimilation of the Baroque forms harmoniously integrated into the ensemble. On the opposite side, which overlooks the garden and the lake, there is a two-storeyed gallery. Covered with plaster, the façades of the Potlogi Palace were adorned with a "carpet" of minute stucco floral motifs of Persian origin taken over from the palaces and pavilions in Istanbul. Stucco floral motifs, in a little higher relief, adorned the interior of the vaulted rooms creating a decorative ensemble as gorgeous as it was lively, suited to the graceful aspect of the entire edifice. We should also mention the fact that the palace was provided with modern conveniences (water supply, bathrooms and lavatories).

The so-called "Ban's House" in Craiova, built by Brâncoveanu in 1699, resembles the Potlogi Palace, though it is smaller and simpler. Despite alterations, it has preserved its *loggia* with round arches and stone columns with simple, straight shafts. The whole composition of the façade is strikingly elegant. The house of the Great Ban Cornea Brăiloiu in the village of Vădeni (Gorj county, northern Oltenia) was built in the same style, with a similar architecture.

At first sight the 17th century ecclesiastical architecture offers a great variety of solutions, and a baffling competition between the new forms and the traditional ones. The ornaments display a wide range of combinations frequently bringing together Western elements (Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque) and Eastern ones (Persian and Ottoman especially). However, a closer examination reveals typological groups which quite clearly show the persistence of the traditional elements, and on the other hand a certain continuity in the effort to create new types of form.

A common trait of the churches in Moldavia and Wallachia is the integration of the bell-tower into their composition usually placed over the porch in Moldavia, and over the pronaos in Wallachia. With both these schools of architecture a progressive limitation in the chromatic elements of the façades should be noted. The mural paintings and the alternation of brick with plaster panels were given up in favour of entirely plastered façades. The latter's chromatically neutral background allows for a better decorative interplay between the walls and the window-frames or stucco flowers. The 17th century monuments easily adopted the relief decorations both in the Oriental and in the Baroque style. In general, the tendency was to employ Baroque elements, which was in keeping with the spirit of the European art of the time. However, it should be underlined that the Baroque ornamentation never competed with the built forms, as their composition, in almost all cases

was preserved calm and well-balanced, in harmony with the traditional local architecture.

The frequent combinations of or changes in the decorative methods deserve being mentioned. As a phenomenon they also have their share in the shaping of common forms and decorative elements able to emphasize the unity of Romanian architecture in general. The Wallachian influence in Moldavia can be detected in the decoration of façades with median string courses, mouldings or niches with receding arched-vaults which are to be found in several Moldavian churches.

In 1645, Prince Vasile Lupu of Moldavia founded Stelea Church in Tîrgoviște. Its model was to enhance the influence of the Moldavian Gothic in Wallachia: for several decades the Stela window frames were to be copied with the monuments south of the Carpathians.

In 17th century Transylvania ecclesiastic architecture offered but few and rather simple achievements. Quite significantly, the only monuments worth noting are those founded by the Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia, who were always concerned with maintaining the ties with "the brothers beyond the mountains" suffering under an ever heavier oppression. In this respect a document issued by Prince George Rákóczy II of Transylvania admitted: "serfdom is a yoke which brings about hardships like those sufferied in the land of the Tartars and even harsher still." Under these conditions the churches in Transylvania built in the style of those in Moldavia and Wallachia were emphasizing the idea of unity once more.

In 1609, Metropolitan Anastasie Crimca founded the big church of the Dragomirna Monastery, a monument of utmost importance for the history of Moldavian architecture. Under one form or another almost all the important 17th century foundations were to bear the stamp of its influence. With its very tall silhouette and unusually rich decoration the big church of Dragomirna actually perpetuates the old plan of the monastery churches in Moldavia. Even the vaulting system stayed traditional in principle, although the decoration brought in semicolonettes, arches and ribs looking like twisted ropes. In order to enhance the ornamental effect of the ribs which draw a thick network on the intrados of the porch vault and on the stellated vaults of the pronaos, the stonemason embellished them with small escutcheons. In point of style this was a strange combination, for the double twisted rope was an old Caucasian motif, while the escutcheons came from the West.

The decoration of the façades girdled by a stone moulding in the shape of a double twisted rope is eclectic yet skilfully composed. The artistic quality of the exterior is enhanced by the tall base, the thrusts and buttresses, by the window-frames in the Moldavian Gothic style yet provided with staysills in the Renaissance style, by the double frieze of arcades on consoles under the cornice and, primarily, by the steeple. The gorgeous decoration of the steeple, entirely carved in stone, inaugurated a new epoch in Moldavian architecture. The steeple faithfully repeats the composition of earlier Moldavian steeples, but it is entirely covered with floral motifs forming small rectangular panels, or with rosettes placed in accolade-shaped niches. If taken separately, some of the ornaments are Renaissance, others are Caucasian style. However, the overall composition, never met before, renders the steeple of Dragomirna highly original.

Vasile Lupu's epoch witnessed a surprising diversification of solutions, mostly due to the Prince's wish to impress his contemporaries with buildings of amazingly luxurious decoration. The Three Hierarchs' Church in Iași

(1639) was built in this spirit. In point of plan and elevation Vasile Lupu's church took over the model of the church at the Galata Monastery. However, it was somewhat simplified in that the burial chamber was given up. Yet the triple arcade separating the nave from the pronaos was preserved, thus giving stronger spatial unity to the interior. The traditional vaulting system was matched to decorative elements taken over from Dragomirna.

The singularity of the Three Hierarchs' Church comes from its façades. As inspired by the steeple of Dragomirna, the Three Hierarchs' façades are entirely covered with genuine tracery in stone. From the base to the cornice, the stone carvings are divided into several registers, each with a different decoration, but never discordant as a whole. An entire universe of ornamental motifs was skilfully employed by artists who mastered both the rules of geometry and those of the Islamic art. Moreover, the artful colouring with lapis lazuli and the lavish gilding of the whole façade made Vasile Lupu's church look uniquely rich. However, the entire decoration was governed by the rules of traditional Moldavian architecture.

A certain Baroque disposition for the rhetorical, for the ornamental emphasis can also be sensed with the Three Hierarchs' Church. It is also responsible for another of Vasile Lupu's initiatives, i.e. the restauration of the old church of the Golia Monastery in Iași (1650—53). The Prince commissioned teams of Italian stonemasons and builders travelling through Moldavia from Poland. However, he forced upon them the traditional Moldavian plan. The foreign masters followed this plan and observed the functional programme of the edifice, but covered the façades with an unexpectedly new range of ornaments, thus introducing the Baroque decoration to Moldavia for the first time. Hence, the façades at Golia, built entirely of dressed and profiled stone, acquire their rhythm through a succession of pilasters "in the colossal order" interplaced with large windows. The window-frames embellished with decorative bands and small pilasters harmoniously fit into the general composition.

The new church of the Golia Monastery exerted a powerful influence upon the later monuments of Iași, even more powerful than the Church of the Three Hierarchs, as the latter's precious decoration could not be imitated easily. Hence, the Golia decorative forms were interpreted and adapted to brick walls until late into the second half of the 18th century.

In 1672, Prince Gheorghe Duca (1665—1666; 1668—1672; 1678—1683) completed the church of the Cetățuia Monastery near Iași. Its plan and elevation were a simplified version of Three Hierarchs' Church, while the decoration of the façades was reduced to a median moulding in the shape of a torsade and to two rows of blind arcades with cornices on the upper register. The interior was decorated with colonettes and ribs in the shape of twisted ropes, an ornamental motif recalling those at Dragomirna.

In Wallachia, the first decades following Michael the Brave's death were marked by unending struggles and instability of the throne — obviously unfavourable conditions for the development of artistic activity.

In 1628 a terrible earthquake destroyed a great number of churches and monasteries in Wallachia. They stayed in ruins until Prince Matei Basarab came to the throne. He reconstructed most of them preserving their initial form but adopting however the decorative elements of the epoch. In order to understand the extent of the effort to reconstruct the country's architectural heritage suffice it to mention that more than fifty churches and monasteries were built or reconstructed in Wallachia in less than a quarter of a

century. The large number of building sites open concomitantly accounted for the great variety of forms which was tempered, however, by the sobriety imposed upon the programmes and decoration of the new edifices.

Of the many innovations brought in by the builders of the time, two were more prominent. First, the construction of a bell-tower over the pronaos, which gave the edifices a more vigorous aspect. Secondly, the creation of the open porch with brick arcades and columns. The not very large distances between the masonry supports together with their massiveness lent the porches built under Matei Basarab a robust, manly aspect, in agreement with the general forms of the edifices whose composition they happily complete.

Several churches raised by Matei Basarab took the church of the Dealu Monastery for a model. Some of them were reconstruction of earlier edifices destroyed by the earthquake of 1628, two others (Plătărești, 1646, and Brebu, 1650) were new churches commissioned by the Prince. The model of Dealu Monastery was not followed very accurately; on the contrary, the masterbuilders of the time displayed rich imagination in handling forms. Only with the Metropolitan Church of Buzău (reconstructed in 1649) and with the Church of Brebu was the pronaos extended in length by the addition of two bays, the eastern one being covered with two steeples. In all the other cases the pronaos was reduced to one bay only with steeples over it and an open porch on the western side. In accordance with the 16th century solutions, the façade decoration was organized in two registers separated by a median moulding.

As an exception possibly at the Prince's request, for the church of the Căldărușani Monastery (1638) near Bucharest, the builders also drew on the ever-so complex plan of the Metropolitan Church in Curtea de Argeș. Thus the pronaos was extended in width yet inside it there were only two pillars to support the vaulting system instead of twelve. In imitation of the church at Dealu, only two steeples were erected above the eastern bay.

An exceptional monument of the period is the new Stelea Church in Târgoviște, founded by the Moldavian Prince Vasile Lupu as a token of his peace treaty with Matei Basarab. Taking over the plan and elevation of Three Hierarchs' Church in Iași, the monument in Târgoviște adopted the Moldavian vaulting system with slanting arches as well as the stone window frames in the Moldavian Gothic style. All these elements point to the presence at Târgoviște of masterbuilders sent by Vasile Lupu from Moldavia. However, the façade decoration organized into two registers of arches points to the presence of Wallachian craftsmen. Thus, on the whole, the Stelea Church represents a synthesis between the architectural forms of the two schools.

The vaulting system of Stelea was not taken over in Wallachia, but the window-frames in Moldavian Gothic style were readily appealed to. They decorate a large number of monuments of Matei Basarab's epoch.

Special mention should be made of Matei Basarab's concern for building churches on the Danube plain down to the river. While his forerunners had built churches mainly in the hills or mountian regions, Matei Basarab was mainly interested in the plains where he built or reconstructed numerous edifices. A closer look at the map will lead us to the following: the Prince's concern for churchbuilding was firstly an effort to reorganize the territory on which grain agriculture was developing: secondly, if we think that the monasteries used to have their own defensive systems we will then understand that the new construction were also meant to better control the Turks' movements in their Danube fortresses.

Continuing his forerunners' policy of material and spiritual support for the Balkan peoples under the Ottoman rule, Matei Basarab sent numerous donations to Mount Athos and to other places of worship in Serbia and Bulgaria.

After his death, despite the troubled times, the building activity continued at a steady pace, an important role being played by the great boyars. By interpreting the forms established during Matei Basarab's reign, the masterbuilders often managed to achieve edifices of great architectural beauty, and in several instances even altered the established programmes.

During 1654—1658, Prince Constantin Şerban founded the Church of St. Demetrios in Bucharest with the intention of turning it into the new Metropolitan Cathedral of Wallachia. Taking over the architectural composition of the Episcopal Church in Curtea de Argeş, the builders accomplished a vigorous and well proportioned construction. They gave up the vertical lines of Neagoe Basarab's foundation in favour of a horizontal composition solidly planted on the ground. On the western side there is a large porch with brick columns, skilfully integrated into the general composition of the building.

With Şerban Cantacuzino's reign (1678—88) a new period of searches and experiments was inaugurated in architecture. They did not touch the basic structural types of the monuments, they were mainly concerned with altering their proportions and changing their ornamental range. The whole artistic vision of the period was marked by elegance and refinement. The masterbuilders commissioned by Şerban Cantacuzino widely extended the church porch, a good example being the porch of the Princess' Church in Bucharest (built 1683).

The changes occurring in the architecture of Wallachia continued under Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688—1714) as well. A new style took shape in perfect harmony with all the other domains of artistic creation, sculpture, painting, ornamental arts, justifying the name of *Brancovan art*. The main innovations of Brancovan architecture should be looked for in the elaboration of forms, the reconsideration of proportions, the importance of porches and especially in the artistry of decorations. The churches now were slenderer than those of the previous periods, yet without any exaggerated stress being laid on their verticality. The harmony of their volumes was splendidly enhanced by the white coating of plaster on which the stone-carved window-frames could be easily discerned. The porch was more than the traditional link between the exterior and the interior, it also became the main ornament of the churches. As such it was embellished with festive decoration: stone columns with straight or twisted shafts, with composite plinths and capitals, sumptuous portals at the entrance of the church proper, mural paintings.

Should one take into account only the eclectic variety of ornaments, the decorative frenzy and the voluptuous sumptuousness, one might easily think that the monuments of the Brancovan epoch fell prey to a Baroque display of forms lacking any equilibrium of ensemble and distinction of details. Nothing would be falser. Beyond this diversity, the ornaments were organized in compositions of refined rigour, always in good taste and always revealing a scholarly subtlety as well as an elaborate balance of the surfaces to be embellished.

This quality of the decorative composition can be perceived not only with the princely foundations, but also with the churches commissioned by the

higher officials of the time. A prominent place among the latter is held by the monuments built by Spatharus Mihail Cantacuzino: the Church of the Dormition in Rîmnicu Sărat, northern Wallachia (1690—1696); the Sinaia Monastery (1695); the Fundenii Doamnei Monastery on the oustkirts of Bucharest (1699); the Colțea Monastery in Bucharest (c. 1700).

The common trait of the Brancovan monuments is the unusually rich carved decoration of the window-frames, of the porch columns and of those separating the naos from the pronaos. The Baroque particularities of the sculptures encompass both the decorative repertory (plant stems, columns with twisted shafts capitals, anthropomorphous and zoomorphic figures) and its composition. In order to satisfy the needs of Baroque taste for a gorgeous decoration, they appealed to elements of Eastern origin. The most surprising in this respect, is the tracery of stucco ornaments covering the façades of the Fundenii Doamnei Church. Oriental palaces, cypresses, tables laden with fruit, an entire decorative universe of Persian origin covers the façades of this graceful monument.

The Brancovan architecture reached its climax during the last decade of the 17th century. Its best example is the great monastic complex of Hurez. It was planned out according to guiding lines observing the principles of the Renaissance and its buildings were organized along the East-West cardinal axis. The large church was placed in the centre of the rectangular precincts and the chapel, set off by its position over the refectory on the western side. The bell-tower, which also designed to guard the entrance to the monastery and the princely residence were built on the southern side. The northern side was reserved for the monks' cells, while the kitchen and the bakery were erected in the western corners of the square. The long galleries with their arcades and stone columns lend unity to the ensemble. Columns in an elastic rhythmical pattern adorn the northern, western and, partly, the southern façades on the inside of the enclosure, establishing a perfect harmony with the elegant porch of the big church. The rather austere aspect of the princely residence is enlivened by the two terraces with their stairways. The immaculate white of the plaster coatings outline the carved and stucco decorations, making them look like as many jewels.

In the 17th century, the Romanians in Transylvania continued to smart under the heavy oppression they had been suffering for centuries. To this were added the reprisals of the noblemen angry at the enthusiasm with which the Romanian serfs had welcomed Michael the Brave. Under such conditions only small wooden churches could be erected. These small peasant churches preserved the traditional forms common to all the wooden churches in the country. Hence, they were built on a rectangular plan of wooden logs placed in horizontal rows with a naos forming a semicylindrical vault, and with a ceilinged pronaos. Their only ornaments are the carvings executed with a chip axe. The few brick churches were raised by the Moldavian and the Wallachian princes. Thus Mihai Rat, one of Michael the Brave's captains, built the church in Teiuș (1606). Matei Basarab repaired the St. Nicholas Church in Hunedoara (1634) and commissioned the church in Porcești (nowadays Turnu Roșu) in the Transylvanian pass of the Olt river, close to the frontier of Wallachia (1653). During his exile the Wallachian Prince Constantin Șerban restored the church in Tinăud in the Crișana region, western Transylvania (1655). In 1690—1691 the Bălăceanu boyars of Wallachia erected the Orthodox church in Bungard (Sibiu county). The most important 17th century foundation in Transylvania, i.e. the St. Nicholas Church in Făgăraș was due to Constantin

Brâncoveanu (1698). With its beautiful porch adorned with semicylindrical arcades and octagonal brick columns , this church recalls the vigorous forms of Matei Basarab's epoch. It is also interesting to note that at the time no church was built in the areas inhabited by the Magyars and Saxons.

In the 17th century as well, the decoration of monuments with stone carvings was the principal domain in which sculpture was proficient. In Moldavia, the Gothic frames for portals and windows in pointed arches or cross mouldings, had already become permanent features of local architecture. They are to be found with most of the 17th century monuments as well, often accompanied by stay sills in the Renaissance style. Sometimes more liberal interpretation brought in alongside the Gothic elements Oriental ones such as small rosettes, flowers and even meandering stalks. This reveals the characteristic feature of the century, i.e. the absorption of a decorative morphology of Eastern origin. During the first half of the 17th century Gothic and Oriental elements coexisted both in Moldavia and Wallachia. Thus, while the church at the Dragomirna Monastery and Three Hierarchs' Church in Moldavia were lavishly decorated with carvings of Oriental origins in Wallachia master stonemason Stoica was employing similar ornaments in decorating the portals and window-frames of the church at Goleşti and of the Trinity Church in Piteşti. The beautiful carved decoration of the fountain in the village of Vieroşi (Argeş county) could be attributed to the same mason. The taste for such embellishments, in an epoch of unexpected stylistic confluences, was stimulated by the Baroque decoration of the church façades at the Golia Monastery in Iaşi.

The same taste for profuse decorations can be perceived in Transylvania as well. Thus, for instance, the window-frames of the Criş castle are mainly in the Renaissance style, but their floral ornaments (1646) are quite similar to those adorning the window- or door-frames of some Moldavian monuments. The base of the pulpit in the Protestant Church in Cluj, moulded by ster Benedek of Cluj (1646), and the pulpit of the Protestant Church in Făgăraş both date from the mid 17th century. They are both striking in the original way they interpret vegetal motifs. The nervous lines and a certain entanglement of the composition could seem to point to a Baroque conception, were the reliefs not toned down by the spirit of a decorative sensitivity influenced by Oriental art as well.

Meanwhile a new decorative vision had emerged in Wallachia too. Window-frames in the Moldavian Gothic style were associated with columns adorned with Baroque elements and with portals characterized by a combination of Late Renaissance elements. Here and there the appearance of heads of angels can be noticed — a timid manifestation of anthropomorphous sculpture. From the very first decade of Constantin Brancoveanu's reign, all these experiments were to lead to a new style.

The sumptuous portal of the Church of the Dormition in Rîmnicu Sărat and the church portal of the Sinaia Monastery bear the signature of master stonemason Mina. He is supposed to have worked out the portals of the Fundenii Doamnei and Colţea churches as well, all of them founded by Spatharus Mihail Cantacuzino. Master Gheorghe carved the garlands, vine stalks, heads of angels and of lions which decorate the Berca Monastery (Buzău county).

The stone carvings of the Hurez Monastery in perfect accordance with the noble architectural and decorative vigour of the whole ensemble, were completed by Vucaşin Caragea. His portrait, together with those of other

craftsmen, appears in the porch fresco. The porch columns of the big church are decorated with Baroque plant motifs interpreted in the Oriental spirit, which seems to confirm the hypothesis that the artist was from Dalmatia.

Although more traditionalist, the tombstone sculpture also evolved from the simple compositions of the previous centuries towards more elaborated forms assimilating gradually the Baroque ornamental language. Ornaments of Eastern origin such as vases with flowers and cypresses gracefully drawn and laid out by incizing made their way in Moldavia. In Wallachia Renaissance forms gained ground, moreover so as the most important tombstones were executed by Transylvanian masters headed by Elias Nicolai of Sibiu.

In Transylvania, the earliest funerary monument of real interest was made by stonemason Petru Dioszegi of Cluj, in 1632. The way it was worked out, in imitation of a widely circulated Renaissance model (a sarcophagus shaped as a "cassone" with strongly protruding profiles), points to the fact that the master was not a very skilful carver of human figures. Dioszegi's contemporary, master Elias Nicolai, worked in Sibiu during the mid-17th century. His numerous works recommend him as the most important stonecarver of his time. He carved only one sarcophagus, formerly in the Evangelical Church of Mălincrav (today at the Art Museum in Budapest). Although he was faithful to the forms of the Late Renaissance, Elias Nicolai proved to be conversant with certain innovations of the Baroque which he assimilated with moderation, never attracted by a rhetorical language. His fame spread south of the Carpathians as well. Thus, significantly enough, he was commissioned to execute no less than three tombstones for Prince Matei Basarab's family. On the tombstone decorated with a *gisant*, made for Mateiaș (1652), the Prince's adopted son, the deceased is portrayed clad in an ankle-long ceremonial attire, lying on one side; the movement suggested together with the ample folds of the mantle give the whole composition a Baroque touch. Among Nicolai's other works, worth mentioning are also the tombstones with *gisants* in the church of Biertan, those with armorial bearings at the Criș castle, and the stone pulpit of the Protestant Church in Cluj. The panels of the latter are decorated with compositions consisting of fruits or vases with flowers (1646).

Sigismund Möss, another sculptor of Sibiu, seems to have learnt his trade in Elias Nicolai's studio. He is the author of an epitaph carved in wood for the Saxon Head Alderman Mathias Semringer (1680). It looks like a picture in relief with the deceased seated at a small table resting his left hand on a book, a mace in his right hand. The epitaph lays emphasis on the rich attire and on the heraldic devices. Due to its deliberate display of pomp, the epitaph reminds of the Sarmatian fashion of the Polish portraits in the early half of the century.

The most sumptuous sculpture of the century, a genuine herald of the Baroque, is the church altar of the "monastery" in Sighișoara, carved by the Slovak master Johann Vest (1680). The altar resembles the façades of a two-storeyed building adorned with architectural elements (columns, architraves etc.). Its main feature however is rich carved decoration consisting of plant motifs and angel heads. The altar is crowned with a statue of Jesus Christ and two statues of angels carrying the emblems of the Passion. Two niches shelter the statues of Peter and Paul. The movements are suggested through the rotation around the vertical axis, with the theatrical gestures set off by the billowing folds.

The 17th century painting differs a lot from that of the 16th century. In Transylvania, the aristocracy and the Saxon gentry embraced the Reformation which had declared war to religious images. Therefore, they did no more encourage the painting of churches, their main concern being that of adorning their own castles and residences of all sorts. In the Protestant and Lutheran churches under the influence of the lay milieu, coffered ceilings were executed at the most. They were decorated with paintings resembling those in the castles. Insufficiently studied so far, the coffered ceilings in Transylvania seem to be the work of joiners who were also painters and decorators. Using books of models and stencils, they decorated the ceilings with flower vases, plant stalks, birds and animals, often fantastic, escutcheons and heraldic symbols. Starting from the models of the Renaissance, faithfully interpreted during the 16th century, the 17th century sculptors usually resorted to simplified craft-like images verging on folk art at times. The most successful artistic achievements are due to masters Ion Tîmplarul, Mihai Cosma and Ion Ilie of Praid.

During the early decades of the 17th century in Moldavia the art of painting was marked by the desire of pomp of the Movilă princes. Concomitantly with the lay paintings — reckoned to have been numerous enough at the princely and boyar residences in Moldavia at the time — murals and icons were painted for the places of worship. Some of the icons at the Pîngărați Monastery (Neamț county) seem to date from the early years of the 17th century. They can be attributed to master painters Ion and Sofronie, the authors of the murals at Sucevița. The elegant figures, the graphic character of faces and vestments, and the vivid chromatics with delicate transitions from one tint to another, argue for this identification.

The murals painted soon after 1609 inside the big church of Dragomirna are closely connected with the new style. The team of master painters included parsons Crăciun and Ignat, Măties and Gligorie — whose signatures have been discovered in the altar. They managed to achieve a harmonious ensemble, characterized by the taste for thronged compositions, in which the groups stand out against a background of crowded imaginary buildings.

Numerous works preserved nowadays in the Bucharest Art Museum, in the wooden churches of Maramureș, at the Moldavian monasteries and in the Metropolitan Church in Iași bring evidence about the existence of several active centres of icon painters in Moldavia. It is significant that, despite the imports of Russian icons, attested by documents mainly during the reigns of Miron Barnovschi and Vasile Lupu, their influence with the local masters was reduced only to certain ornamental details. Seldom enough can this influence be perceived in iconography or in the interpretation of forms.

For the murals of the Three Hierarchs' Church Prince Vasile Lupu commissioned a mixed team of Moscow and local painters. The old paintings executed during 1641—2 were taken down and most of them destroyed when the church was restored at the end of the 19th century. The votive painting, of which only fragments have been preserved, is rather a collective portrait of courtiers; emphasis is laid on ceremonial attire and ornaments, and the personages' faces are obviously idealized.

The murals decorating the Hlincea Monastery, near Iași, were completed by master painter Matei, son of painter Ion, in 1660. Their iconographic programme shows close ties with the murals of Dragomirna and Sucevița painted a few decades earlier. Surprising at Hlincea are the dull colouring, in a range

of cold greys, and the stern, severe drawing. Even the votive painting representing Vasile Lupu and his son Ştefăniţă (who reigned in Moldavia from 1659 to 1661) is rigid and hieratical.

Although only fragments of the murals adorning the church of the Golia Monastery (1659—1661) have been preserved — the 18th century fires and earthquakes made its repainting necessary — they can be considered the most valuable murals of 17th century Moldavia. Their excellent drawing and colouring can easily compare with the art of the icon painters of the time. What renders the Golia paintings particularly beautiful is the expressive mixture of fine drawing lines and subtly handled chromatic harmonies, and, at the same time, the personages' elegant figures, their noble faces and their hair styled in the Hellenistic tradition.

Although affected by the restoration in the 19th century, the votive painting seems to have preserved the original arrangement of the personages, their presentation being quite similar to that in the votive painting of the Three Hierarchs' Church. Here again we have a group portrait, with both the drawing and the chromatic modelling adapted to the manner of the lay easel painting. That lay painting was present at Vasile Lupus' Court is proved by the two portraits embroidered on velvet representing Princess Tudosca, the Prince's first wife, and Ioan Lupu. The two embroideries, whose cartoons were executed by a skilful painter, employ the usual repertory of the effigies in Polish-Sarmatian style in fashion at the time. Tudosca's portrait is impressive on account of its monumentality, and of its discreet colouring. The bluish turquoise mantle is of a striking beauty.

A great lover of splendour and pomp, Prince Vasile Lupu surrounded himself — like so many patrons of arts during the Renaissance ant the Baroque — with court artists. Some of them, like painter Nicolae for instance, he sent on diplomatic missions to imperial courts. The number and great artistic worth of the icons painted during his reign reveal the genuine style of the mid-17th century Moldavia. The large number of commissions drew in painters from Wallachia, like masters Tatomir and Vlaicu, and from Transylvania such as the painter who signed his work "*Maler*" Baraski.

The last important achievement of 17th century Moldavian painting was the fresco decorating the interior of the church of the Cetăţuia Monastery near Iaşi, founded by Prince Gheorghe Duca. The team of painters included brothers Gheorghe, Mihai and Dima of Ianina, in the north of Greece, and masters Nicolae and Ştefan, both of Iaşi. The latter had made some of the paintings in the Three Hierarchs' Church. The Prince's family are again portrayed as a stately group following the tradition of the votive paintings of Vasile Lupu's time. The minute description of the vestements turns this fresco into an invaluable document on the epoch. The unusually complex iconographic programme is characterized by the use of traditional themes as well as by certain innovations. Thus, of great importance is the rather random distribution of characters, which proves that the painters were no longer able to grasp fully the symbolic meanings of the images they were creating.

Fortunately, in Wallachia, the hard times that followed Michael the Brave's tragic death did not put an end to the activity of the painting centre in Târgovişte. In 1615 one of its representatives, master Stoica, painted valuable icons for the church of Brădet hermitage (Argeş county).

Icons and murals under Prince Matei Basarab were created in great numbers, all of them in perfect harmony with the architecture of the epoch. As a rule they preserved the already familiar patterns which were duly adapted

to the size of the church and to the founder's material means. Yet, during this period, more than anything else it was the votive paintings that gained in importance. They became genuine group portraits meant to gratify the ever-growing worldly tastes of the donors. Actually, the whole painting was bound to assume a marked decorative character receptive to the brilliant effects.

The frescoes at the Sadova Monastery, dated to about 1640, seem to be the oldest murals from Matei Basarab's times.

Although its outward look is modest enough, the church of the Arnota Monastery (Vilcea county) is adorned with a fine fresco. Presumably its author was Stroe of Tîrgoviște who also signed the icons of the iconostasis (1644). Apparently, the painter observed the traditional iconographic programme. A closer examination, however, reveals his innovations in point of conception and pictorial language. They turn this whole ensemble into a work of art significant for the 17th century. Thus, the theological values are replaced by decorative ones, the narrative proceeds at a slow, quiet pace, devoid of dramatic tension, the general atmosphere is even tempered. The colour-range is limited, yet warm and luminous, with touches of red to enliven it, the line of the drawing is mostly rounded and modulated, and the compositions are light and clear. There is nothing of the solemn character of the older pictures of voivodes in the votive painting representing Prince Matei Basarab and his wife Elina.

The murals in the church of the former Plătărești Monastery (Giurgiu county) as well as the numerous icons — some of them to be found in Transylvanian churches — highlight the permanent effort to preserve and develop an artistic genre of old tradition, genre which had reached an epoch of renewals even in the Orthodox milieu.

In the years following Matei Basarab's reign, the painters' workshops continued to be prosperous. The iconographic programmes were still traditional; on the other hand however, decorative elements were employed to a larger extent — obvious even when the interpretation of figures seems to suggest a more austere attitude. Worth mentioning are master painters Ianache and Mihail Monahul, who decorated the church in the village of Săcuieni (Dîmbovița county, 1669), Tudoran Zugravul, author of the frescoes in the church of Băjești (Argeș county, 1669), Gheorghe "the Greek" and Dima "the Romanian" who painted the church of the Topolnița hermitage (Mehedinți county, 1673).

Tudoran, the painter of Băjești, was a most accomplished personality. A vigorous draftsman and an austere colourist, Tudoran can be considered the most important portrait painter of the period. The numerous portraits making up the vast votive painting at Băjești show the artist's genuine gift of rendering the differences in age, character and social rank. In the pronaos the portrait of Dragomir Zidarul, the masterbuilder who erected the church, can be seen among those of certain members of the founder's family. This is the first portrait of its kind in Wallachia, and it is all the more significant as it points to the changes occurring in the artists' social condition.

The innovations Șerban Cantacuzino's reign brought about in architecture, among which the quest for elegant forms, found a precious counterpart in murals and icons. The changes were also due to some Greek master painters who came to Wallachia. They brought over an eclectic and refined style which blended reminiscences of Paleologan Byzantine painting and with

mannerist influences coming from Italy. The so-called Cretean school, which had profited from the fact that the island was under Venetian rule, enjoyed special appreciation with the Mount Athos monasteries. Through them its influence spread to the Balkan peninsula and everywhere where the resistance against the Ottoman rule was manifest some way or another. Until the second half of the 17th century, in the Romanian countries the echoes of the Cretean school had been rather timid. Here the tradition had been powerful enough and the number of local painters large enough to prevent the assimilation of an artistic language which seemed too effeminate and too conventional as compared to the robust forms the local commissioners preferred. This times under the protection of the Cantacuzino princes and their family in general, the activity of the Greek painters bore fruit. Actually their pictorial style gratified the taste for rich ornaments and decoration, for the elegant, elaborate forms required by the new aspirations of the Romanian society.

The artist whose work expressed the renewing spirit of the epoch to the highest degree, was Pîrvu Pîrvescu nicknamed "the Mute". Born in Cîmpulung-Muscel (October 12, 1657), he started his artistic career very early, at the Negru Vodă Monastery of his native town. He continued his training in Moldavia, where he became familiar with the famous murals and with the Russian and Greek icon makers commissioned by the local church founders at the time. Being of a scholar descent and himself a cultivated man, Pîrvu Mutu was able to select from what the painting of the time had to offer, the very means which suited the efforts the most representative personalities of the Romanian culture were making to create an original, modern art. That is why he gave particular attention to the art of portrayal. His portraits were never heraldic or symbolic as those painted by Dobromir of Tîrgoviște at the Metropolitan Church of Curtea de Argeș; they were means to render the historical present and the deep structure of human personality. His work is considerable, and includes numerous murals and icons. At the same time he was a real master, his studio in Bucharest being a small school of painting in fact. He died at the Robaia hermitage (Argeș county) where he had turned a monk 1735.

He was well acquainted with the principal monumental paintings in Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as with the new trends in the Cretean-Athonite paintings. Yet he was no stranger to the innovations of the Late Renaissance and of the Baroque either. These latter ones he got to know from the copies of engravings he could study in the famous libraries of the Cantacuzinos who were "schooled" in Italy most of them. Though faced with so many trends, he was able to create his own well-balanced and original style characterized by a temperate remodelling of the traditional means of expression so as to make them meet the requirements of the epoch.

Pîrvu Pîrvescu's masterpiece is the votive painting in the pronaos of the Filipeștii de Pădure church (1692) founded by Agha Matei Cantacuzino. Though he grouped together fifty-five personages — the entire Cantacuzino family — Pîrvu Mutu managed to define the features of each of them. At the same time, he succeeded in creating a homogeneous composition, as unitary as it is expressive. By using a colour scheme of fine reds, greens and blues, as well as many tinted greys, the artist individualized the portraits especially with the help of a synthetic drawing, freed from accessories, discreet yet firm. The portraits of children especially, impress by their fresh tenderness, by the naive and timid expressions, the artist proving to be an admirable interpreter of youth. We must also mention the paintings at Măgureni (1694), Sinaia

(1695), Rîmnicu Sărat (1697), Bordești-Vrancea (1699). At the latter monument Pîrvu Mutu painted his selfportrait, a brush in his right hand and a palette in his left one. We can see in this image the outright assertion of the dignified condition of the artist.

Another artist to play a prominent part in the development of painting in Wallachia towards the end of the 17th century was the Greek painter Constantinos. He probably came to Wallachia following Prince Șerban Cantacuzino's invitation. First, together with painter Ioan, he decorated the *Doamnei* Church (the church of the Princess) in Bucharest (1683). This is mature work which proves him to be a gifted representative of the post-Byzantine painting of the Levant.

The Hellenistic gracefulness of certain personages betrays Constantinos' inclination towards the types of mannerist painting the Cretean school cultivated. This inclination is also obvious in the exaggerated fluency of the drawing and the conventional beauty of the faces. Fully integrated into the Romanian artistic milieu, Constantinos soon became the head of the great painting studio at Hurez. By attracting and forming a large number of master painters and apprentices, this studio was to become a genuine school of painting with a great power of diffusion. It spread the fame of the flourishing artistic life in Wallachia under Constantin Brâncoveanu far and wide.

The great church of the Hurez Monastery, actually its principal monument, was decorated with frescoes by a team of master painters — Ioan, Andrei, Stan, Neagoe, Ioachim — working under the guidance of Constantinos in the year 1693. As they were to decorate an edifice of large dimensions which was to be a symbol of the founder's power and aspirations, the painters worked out a special iconographic programme. Thus, while preserving the traditional symbolic structure, they deliberately developed certain themes which revived the tradition of the militant painting at the time of Stephen the Great, Neagoe Basarab and Petru Rareș. In order to convey the ideas imposed by the Prince, the painters resorted to the iconography of St. Constantine, the patron saint of the Prince, and to that of the votive painting.

The illustrated story of Emperor Constantine's life takes up most of the eastern wall of the pronaos. The central scene represents the battle on the bridge of Milvius. Drawn out in the spirit of the battle scenes with a strong lay narrative character, the composition has the same significance as *The Cavalcade of the Holy Cross* at Pătrăuți and *The Siege of Constantinople* at the Moldovița Monastery. As an outstanding representative of the anti-Ottoman policy through this image Constantin Brâncoveanu was reminding the people of the triumphant power of Christianity and thus proclaimed his own belief in the liberation of the country. The votive painting at Hurez introduces to iconography political allusions of an even more direct character. Starting from the example offered by the votive painting in the Episcopal Church of Curtea de Argeș, master Constantinos and his team covered the walls of the pronaos with a vast procession of personages, members of the Brancoveanu, Basarab and Cantacuzino families. This monumental scene filled with stately-looking characters was obviously designed to make a deep impression on the congregation. In this the painters have masterfully served the intention of the founder of the church. Besides the gallery of voivodal portraits decorating the pronaos, the group of portraits on the porch wall need special mention. They present on the masters who built the monument: brick layers, stonemasons, joiners are seen holding the symbols of their respective trade. Hence, they were no longer anonymous and, even more than that, they were given a

place of honour as makers of spiritual values. This was in keeping with the modern epoch's new attitude towards arts, which was so well illustrated by the cultural and artistic activity during Constantin Brancoveanu's reign.

The eastern wall of the porch is covered with an ample representation of *The Last Judgement* in which — the same as formerly in Moldavia — groups of Turks and Tartars were placed among the sinners, the enemies of the Romanian countries being considered among the great malefactors of mankind. The composition also includes numerous moralizing episodes, some of them implying social criticism, which denounce vices of every kind, abuses, injustice the oppression of the poor. Henceforward the theme of *The Last Judgement* was to become wide-spread in Walachia, offering the painters the opportunity to denounce social inequity and bad morals.

The great value of the Hurez paintings was emphasized by by Charles Diehl, the great Byzantinologist, who wrote: "The powerful Byzantine tradition prevails at the Hurez Monastery, maybe the finest monument in Romania (...). These frescoes are some of the most remarkable Romanian art has produced and at the same time they prove the continuity of Romanian and Byzantine art, they illustrate the extraordinary brilliance art acquired under Constantin Brancoveanu."

Other monuments were also decorated at Hurez. Considered altogether, they allow for a clear picture on the centre of painting set up at the great Brancovan monastic complex. Marin and Preda were the authors of the chapel frescoes (1686—1687); the infirmary was decorated by Preda, Nicolae and Efrem (1699); the church of the Saints Apostles' Hermitage was painted by Iosif and Ion (1700). A characteristic feature of the Hurez school of painting is the emphasis laid on decorative effects, obvious both in the manner of the figurative compositions and in the large surfaces covered with floral motifs (which at the Saints Apostles' Hermitage, for instance, take up almost half the surface of the walls). The narrative treatment is also typical. Thus the religious images are brought closer to reality by being interspersed with elements from the actual environment, with even a touch of humour being added sometimes. Their interest in reality made the painters introduce some changes in iconography. Hence, the psalms were illustrated by scenes from everyday life, with people dancing in *horas* (round dances) on fiddlers' music, dressed up in period garments. The fresh artistic language and the somewhat crude vigour of the expression should also be outlined, as they herald the rustication of the religious painting.

After the decoration of the monuments at Hurez was completed, the members of the group headed by Constantinos, who had become master painters themselves by now, scattered into the country to decorate other edifices. This phenomenon was characteristic of the first half of the 18th century.

The decoration of so many places of worship also accounts for the booming development of icon painting. Icons were primarily designed to adorn the iconostases. Yet they also came to decorate the monastic cells and princely and boyar residences, and soon became a great fashion. Therefore they were produced in a large number of workshops at Hurez, in Bucharest, Târgoviște, Cîmpulung, Pitești and in many other important towns of Wallachia. The introduction of Baroque ornamental elements that featured the mural painting was even more extensive with icons: one could notice a typical preference for the Baroque thrones with elaborate patterns, for fanciful background scenery, for vestments with billowing folds. All these exuberant ornamental elements were toned down by the well-balanced compositional

structures. The same classical tendency towards an inner ordering of forms proper to architectural monuments can be sensed with the art of icons as well.

The rapid spread of the craft of printing brought about the decline of the art of calligraphy and of illuminated manuscripts, although hand-written works of great beauty were still produced in the 17th century.

The most important calligrapher and miniaturist at the beginning of this century was metropolitan Anastasie Crimca. Thanks to his diligence the Dragomirna Monastery became one of the most active *scriptoria* of Moldavia. His unexpectedly numerous manuscripts, of a refined elegance, attract our attention in the first place by their beautiful calligraphy, severe and devoid of artifices. On the contrary, the scores of illustrations that accompany the text, sometimes even interpersing with the lines like a commentary in images, display a surprising delight in the narrative and in decoration. The style is predominantly graphic with hachures used as a decorative element, the ornamental effect being enhanced by the large number of borders with floral motifs, the abundance of initials and vignettes. Nothing here recalls the monumental images of the 16th century Moldavian Gospels anymore. The vision is decorative, with Oriental tinges, the manner is preeminently graphic, the dense network of lines being emphasized by the flat colouring, distributed in patches of light. One can recognize in the delight taken in the narrative and in the decorative sense the stylistic atmosphere of the Sucevița frescoes which the painters of Dragomirna adopted when decorating the big church.

The epoch of Prince Vasile Lupu witnessed the revival of several *scriptoria* in Moldavia. Infortunately, the study of the manuscripts is hampered by the fact that they are scattered in various libraries of the Christian East and of the West. The most important calligrapher and miniaturist of the epoch was Ivanco of Rădăuți. His frontispices and initials show a great freedom of interpretation and an unusually vivid palette. In portraying the Evangelists, Ivanco retained only little of the Byzantine patterns. His personages are placed in interiors with Baroque furniture. The effects of the geometrical perspective the painter employs point to his having assimilated some of the western artistic methods. More conservative, Ghervasie of Putna preserved the frontispices and initials specific for the 15th and 16th centuries.

The activity of the printing press by the Metropolitan Seat in Iași resulted in the slackening of the activity of calligraphers and miniaturists. But soon master engravers were to appear who cut in wood frontispices, illustrations and ornamental initial letters designed to adorn the printed books. One of the earliest xylographers in Moldavia was Ilie, author of the illustrations for *The Romanian Book of Learning* printed in Iași, in 1643. Inspired by the old miniatures and the Baroque illustrations of books, Ilie introduced the portraits of the four Evangelists, images from the Christological cycle, and also frontispices, armorial bearings, vignettes. The entire ornamentation puts a Baroque stamp on this book printed in Iași.

In Wallachia the development of the school of calligraphy under Prince Matei Basarab is all the more surprising as the printing shops were much more active than anywhere else. Most of the manuscripts commissioned by Matei Basarab were designed for certain important monasteries in the Christian East. This strengthens the belief in a presumedly deliberate cultural protectorate assumed by the Romanian rulers and meant to increase their authority as successors of Byzantium.

The Missal written by the copyst Radu Sîrbu of the Brancoveni Monastery (1653—1654) contains the votive painting of Prince Matei Basarab and his wife Elina. Its graphical interpretation reminds of Crimca's manuscripts. In a Greek *Four Gospels* (today at the Byzantine Museum in Athens), the sumptuous votive painting of Matei Basarab is framed in by a lavish floral decoration of Oriental origin. The two beutiful miniatures portraying the Prince and his wife Elina, included in the manuscript of 1638, belong to the same stylistic family.

The masterpiece of the illuminated manuscripts created during Matei Basarab's reign is the *Slujbelnic* (Breviary) of Metropolitan Ştefan of Wallachia (c. 1653). In point of ornaments it outshines any other previous manuscript. Its lavish decorations consist of an unusually larse number of illustrations either covering whole pages, inserted between lines or making up the frontispices. The initial letters — sometimes several of them on the same page — show the artist's unbridled inventiveness in employing figures of saints, a fantastic bestiary (with references to fables at times), phytomorphous elements. These latter ones are only seldom used alone. Unlike the other illuminated manuscripts of the period, in which mostly Oriental motifs — Greek and Armenian — were used, Metropolitan Ştefan's manuscript is predominantly inspired by the western Baroque ornaments. The Baroque influence can easily be detected in the graphic interpretation and especially in the attempts at modelling forms through colour.

Archimandrite Ioan was one of the engravers active in Wallachia during the reign of Matei Basarab and a highly interesting artist. He was the author of a large number of images: votive paintings, religious scenes, frontispices, vignettes etc. Conversant with the western printed works, Ioan used the Baroque decorative elements with a high degree of freedom in remarkably simplified and clear compositions of a very expressive line and striking black and white contrasts.

The large number of books printed under Şerban Cantacuzino and Constantin Brâncoveanu made it necessary to set up several engravers' workshops in Bucharest, Rîmnicu Vîlcea, and Buzău. In Moldavia a similar workshop was set up at the Neamţ Monastery. Some of the prints, such as *The Bible of Bucharest* (1688) for instance, are genuine graphic art monuments. In point of style the frontispices, initial letters, vignettes (with plant motifs) made use of are closely related to the stone frames and to the iconostases carved in wood.

For the first decades of the 17th century the Wallachian embroideries show a marked traditionalist tendency, while the Moldavian pieces evince a more rapid assimilation of a new decorative language characterized by ostentatious lavishness and a taste for pomp. The most important pieces embroidered at the beginning of the 17th century are the ones donated by the Movilă Princes to the Sucevița Monastery. The palls covering the graves of Princes Ieremia and Simion introduce fresh portrait qualities and the novelty of a pre-eminently decorative attitude wonderfully served by the means of expression specific to embroidery. Worked out in gold, silver and coloured silks on velvet, they have borders made up of commemorative inscriptions combined with well individualized floral elements of donor, the pieces also contain a garden of cypresses and flowers, the arms of Moldavia and the image of a church with its façades decorated with scenes from the Christological cycle. Both the outlook of the decorative composition and the conspi-

cuousness of the details refer the two palls to the stylistic area of refined confluence of Western and Eastern trends, characteristic for the entire epoch of the Movilă dynasty.

The orientation towards sumptuous decoration of the Moldavian embroidery is quite obvious with the lithurgical pieces as well (the epitaphios of Sucevița, 1592—1593; the epitaphioses of Dragomirna, 1612 and 1625).

During Vasile Lupu's epoch the embroidery in Moldavia underwent a substantial stylistic change, becoming a lay ceremonial art as brilliant as it was supperficial in expression. Significant from this point of view is the large group of embroideries at the Three Hierarchs' Church in Iași. Their perfect unity in decorative style proves that they come from the same workshop. They were executed on purple velvet for the central part, and on green velvet for the decorative borders. The wealth of floral element on the borders or convering the central part turn the figures of saints into mere auxiliary ornaments that contribute to the overall decorative effect. The two embroidered portraits mentioned earlier, i.e. of Princess Tudosca and Prince Ioan, follow the same trend of sumptuous decorations. According to the painter's cartoon, the embroiderers resorted to means of expression of Polish origin.

Few of the embroideries executed under Matei Basarab have come down to us: one of them is the *epitaphios* presented by Metropolitan Ștefan in 1662. Starting from the traditional iconographic pattern, the artist resorted to the extollment of the sorrowful gestures in keeping with the Baroque spirit of the epoch. The border enclosing the central part — rich and precious in decorative interpretation — introduces the Baroque novelty of elements that extend beyong the border limit and integrate into the central composition producing an unexpected close-up effect.

Șerban Cantacuzino's epoch saw the revival of the art of embroidery. This assertion is confirmed not only by the number and the quality of the embroidered pieces but also by the possibility of atributing them to a workshop sponsored by the Prince.

Gherasim of Galata was an artist with a well-defined and original personality. His embroideries display an exceptional professional skill subordinated to a pre-eminently decorative vision. A notable trait is the perfect equality of the component parts with no hierarchization between the figures of the donors and the plant motifs. Despinetos of Constantinople was also a prominent artist. At Constantin Brâncoveanu's order he embroidered an *epitrachilion* for the Hurez Monastery (1695). Worked in gold, silver, and coloured silks on red Indian satin, the *epitrachilion* shows the artist's command of a perfect technique. The figures in the votive painting as well as those of saints are rendered with unusual minuteness, and the large variety of stitches and ornamental motifs interspersed with an abundance of pearls turn this stole into a genuine piece of jewellery.

There was perhaps no other field of artistic creation in the 17th century to better illustrate the permanence of certain traditional forms and the ability to assimilate new decorative formulas — Western and Eastern as well — than the art of precious metals. Nor was there any other field in which the common artistic attitude and the active exchange of masters between the Romanian principalities were more obvious. Masters from Wallachia and Moldavia as well as from Saxon centres in Transylvania were commissioned to make hundreds of lithurgical objects meant to adorn the numerous churches erected throughout the century. Sometimes the ecclesiastical objects were commissioned to masters in Germany (Augsburg, Nuremberg), or in the Balkan

Peninsula. And again, some other objects seem to have been brought directly from Istanbul. The relative unity of the silverware produced at the time was secured by the common attraction for the sumptuous and for the abundant ornaments.

At the beginning of the century in Moldavia, Gligorie Moesiu, a silversmith of Suceava, executed a beautiful embossed silver vessel engraved with scenes from the Christological cycle. Gligorie Moesiu's works outline the persistence of the traditional simplicity. However, certain ornamental elements evince the receptivity for new decorative methods and the similarities with the murals at the Sucevița Monastery in point of interpretation.

Some other times the forms and decorations recall the objects made at the time of Stephen the Great. Yet the interpretation of the Gothic element has already developed into a more decorative vision with Oriental touches, closely related to that shared by the silversmiths in the Balkan Peninsula.

The assimilation of decorative elements of Ottoman origin reached its climax under Vasile Lupus and it is exemplified by the large number of ecclesiastical objects the Prince presented to the Three Hierarchs' Church. Floral cartouches of Persian origin, engravings and fretwork as well as pieces which seem to be copies of Ottoman objects clearly illustrate the artistic contact with the Near East. Other objects — such as the silver chandelier adorned with griffins and heads of angels, or a silver cup which seems to come from a German workshop (Regensburg) — stand proof for the assimilation of Baroque models.

During the first half of the 17th century most of the silver objects in Wallachia come from Transylvanian workshops. They allow for a better knowledge of the activity carried out by the Saxon masters of Brașov where most of the silverware comes from. The silversmiths Hans Hermann, Michael Schelling, Johannes Retsch, Daniel Bloweber, Thomas Trepsches the Young and M.G., an artist who signed his works with his initials only, are the authors of several cups and goblets of embossed and engraved silver, which must have belonged to the Princely Court, later to be donated to monasteries. Their forms and ornaments point to the influence of the Late Renaissance, though towards the middle of the century the Baroque ornaments gains more ground.

The book cover at the Mărgineni Monastery (1648—1658) inaugurates a new stage in the evolution of silverware in Transylvania and Wallachia. It was worked out by hammering, chasing and gilding and decorated with cast and enamelled ornaments, probably by a workshop in Brașov. As novelties it introduced the compositions with many details and landscape elements, as well as the pre-eminently artistic modelling of forms which foccussed on dramatic attitudes and expression. The book cover of Mărgineni is Baroque both in its means and in its effect. As such, it was to be followed by numerous similar pieces, as henceforward the production of the silversmiths in Brașov and Sibiu benefitted from Șerban Cantacuzino's and Constantin Brancoveanu's generous donations. The silversmiths who signed their works M.W. and E.V., the master silversmiths Georg Heltner, Lukas Baum, Johannes Henning, Thomas Klosch, Georgius May II, all of them of Brașov, as well as Sebastian Hann of Sibiu, made a great number of various objects commissioned by the founders of churches in Wallachia. The Wallachian founders requested the silversmiths to preserve the traditional iconography, yet in their turn they were ready to accept the Late Renaissance and especially the Baroque decorative language. Here and there pieces made by local

Wallachian masters are to be found as well. Their execution, though simpler, reveals the same preference for rich Baroque ornaments.

No pieces of furniture from the 17th century princely or boyar residences in Wallachia and Moldavia have come down to us and the descriptions of the time are too poor in details to enable even a hypothetical reconstitution. On the contrary, for Transylvania, several detailed inventories from the castles of Lăzarea, Făgăraș, Criș and others, allow for a clear picture of richly furnished interiors. In principle, the listed period furniture can be attributed to the 16th and 17th centuries and considered of the Renaissance style. This assumption can be corroborated by the few pieces of furniture which have been preserved, some of them the work of Italian cabinet makers. However local workshops also existed in Cluj, Sighișoara, Bistrița. They produced many of the chests for clothes which in those times were still preferred to wardrobes. They were decorated with architectural profiles (pilasters, arcades etc.), with inlays or paintings and sometimes with rich plant motifs executed in fretwork or applied on the surface of the chest, evincing a taste midway between ceremonial art and usual handicraft objects.

The main pieces of art furniture preserved in Wallachia and Moldavia belong to the interior architeture of churches. The most numerous are iconostases. Apart from a few morphological differences, the iconostases in the two principalities share obvious common elements. They show a clear architectural composition and abundant ornaments consisting of reliefs with architectural profiles or stucco plant stems, gilt and partly polychrome. Such are the iconostases at Buhalnița, Rădeana, Vînători-Neamț — all in Moldavia — and at Clocociov, Crasna, Rîmești in Wallachia.

Under Șerban Cantacuzino, the iconostases decoration became even more abundant (Cotroceni, Valea Danului etc.), revealing a particular disposition for sumptuous ornaments and thus paving the way for the Brancovan style. During Constantin Brancoveanu's reign numerous churches were endowed with such sumptuous pieces of interior architecture. Their unique effect is due to the simultaneous impact on the eye of three different elements: the icons, with their festive polychromy, the ornaments of the screen itself, carved or fretted, and the brilliant icon guildings. The general lay-out of the Brancovan altar screens is the traditional one, as required by the iconographic canons. Designed to set off the arrangement of the icons painted on-wood, the Brancovan iconostases adopted the compositional archiecture of the façade of a multistoreyed building with the horizontal rhythm secured by colonettes. The whole wooden structure of horizontal beams and and colonettes was treated decoratively, the ornamental motifs voluptuously embracing all the surfaces. The carved plant stems interlace to nest numberless graceful, unexpected animal images. The fineness of the line, the subtle modelling, the prefectly accurate compositions and the minute finishing touches make of these iconostases genuine masterpieces of the genre (Hurez, Filipeștii de Pădure, Arnota etc.).

The church doors also deserve special mention. With them the master carvers of the epoch preferred the low relief and the compositions based on repetition. They made use of a rich ornamental repertory consisting mostly of plant motifs which sometimes recall brocade fabrics. The harmonious distribution and warm carving of the motifs, the suggestive interpretation and transposition of forms from nature are never excessive, never lacking in moderation. Beyond the apparent wealth, one can feel the sure taste for a well-balanced composition (Berca, Tismana. Făgăraș).

Urban Baroque and Rural Baroque

The 18th century was a complex, fascinating age. Its achievements are able to demonstrate that, despite oppression of all kind, an irresistible movement of social and national awakening was in the making at the time, and that it was precisely during that troubled period that the foundations of the unity of Romanians everywhere were being laid out, with numerous sacrifices though. The fall of Transylvania to the Hapsburg Empire (as early as 1691) and the crisis of the Ottoman Empire were to trigger a wave of unimaginable oppression. The independent policy carried out by Princes Constantin Brancoveanu in Wallachia and Dimitrie Cantemir (1710—1711) in Moldavia made the Turks install the Phanariot rulers (from the Phanar District in Istanbul) on the thrones of the Romanian principalities. They were the Porte's trusted subjects who pledged submissive compliance with all its requests. The Phanariot reigns (which were to last until 1821) pushed oppression beyond limits. The thirst for getting rich of these mere officers of the Turks, foreigners to the land they were ruling, was quenchless. Moreover so as they knew themselves to be at the mercy of the Porte and permanently in danger to be replaced with other pretenders who plotted against them and promissed the Turks ever largers sums for the throne. These sums the Phanariots paid for obtaining the crown were afterwards tenfold recouped from the ever increasing taxes they imposed on the country. The Phanariot regimes were a reaction of the Istanbul suzerains against the clear tendencies of emancipation and national liberation in the Romanian principalities. The efforts to regain the legitimate right to freedome, justice and civic dignity were present all throughout the 18th century. Numerous popular uprisings in the three Romanian countries listed in their programmes both social and national claims. It is also highly significant that at the Peace Congress held at Focşani and in Bucharest (1772—1773) meaning to conclude one of the numerous Russian-Turkish wars of the period, the delegations of Moldavia and Wallachia claimed the independence and the union of the two sister countries. Actually, all along this century countless cultural and artistic events brought their share to the unity of substance of the Romanian spirituality. The European echo of Dimitrie Cantemir's works had of course been preceded by the Romanians' own understanding of the idea he advocated, i.e. the Latin origin of the Romanians, their continuity on the territory they inhabited, and the need to struggle for freedom.

Besides serious discord within the Transylvanian community, the religious union with Rome forced by the Hapsburg Empire on the Romanians had one positive consequence: the creation of the cultural centre of Blaj with its brilliant group of scholars known under the name of The Transylvanian School. Through their laborious research — particularly on the field of history and philology — fresh evidence was brought in support of the Romanians' Latin origin, their continuity and their unity as a nation.

The achievements in the field of fine arts also come to illustrate the irresistible process of social and national emancipation, the aspiration towards unity and independence of the Romanian countries. This was a period when the upper aristocracy , sensing their own decline, reduced to the minimum their cultural activities. The phenomenon was counterbalanced, however, by a genuine explosion of building initiatives on the part of the town guilds and the peasant communities. Thus, hundreds of churches were erected all

throughout the Romanian countries, their architecture and monumental ornaments revealing precisely the aspirations of the lower and middle classes. The circulation of many artisans on both sides of the Carpathians together with the active circulation of books printed in Wallachia and Moldavia contributed to the creation of common programmes, and led to a relative unification in the cultural forms and substance of the three Romanian Lands.

In this respect the heritage of the Brancovan art played a very important role, somewhat lesser in architecture, of a considerable extent in the field of painting. From its stem countless local centres branched out to flourish in the villages and to blend ultimately with the folk art of peasant expression. It is precisely this popular or rather parapopular aspect — which has made some researchers neglect the art of the 18th century — that deserves emphasis as it demonstrates the viability of the phenomenon and its formation in direct relation to the noblest aspirations of a people struggling to regain its rights. Of course, if we take into consideration the remote times of the Middle Ages, the 18th century art may seem to be in utter decline; yet, if the implications of the spiritual renewal of the epoch are considered, it will appear to be a young art capable to lay the foundations for the achievements of the 19th century decades of revolutionary impetus.

As compared to the previous centuries, the 18th century produced by far a greater number of monuments and achievements in architecture, and an increased variety of programmes, due to the participation of the different social categories to the constructive initiatives. The emanciptation of the lower and midle classes can be illustrated by the impressive number of churches erected by the peasant communities or by the artisans' or merchants' corporations. Another significant feature was the increasing number of brick houses in towns, for their development was closely connected with the growth of the economic activity of the manufactory and pre-industrial type. Even if the largest and most important edifices were yet due to the peaks of aristocracy or to the state power, the edifices built by the lower and middle classes prevailed numerically. Their reconsideration allows for a better understanding of the extensive phenomenon of social and political reshaping occurring in the Romanian countries.

In point of form, the 18th century architecture proved to be more responsive to the decorative patterns of the Baroque, which was adopted and interpreted in several zonal variants. These variants were conditioned on the one hand by the traditional fund, and on the other by the circumstances in which the new style could materialize in representative monuments. In Transylvania, Baroque architecture was initially imposed as the official architecture of the Hapsburg Empire, as part of a sustained activity of counter-reformation. In the main towns of the newly subjected territories the imperials erected monumental churches. Subsequently their models were to be revived, simplified and adapted to the locale taste. This process of assimilation was accelerated by the large number of village-built churches.

The Baroque architecture reached Moldavia indirectly, through forms mediated either by the Transylvanian centres or by the Istanbul which had already adapted the Baroque to the Oriental Islamic decorative tradition. In Wallachia the rich heritage of Brancovan arhitecture was reaching maturity during the first decade of the 18th century. In point of style it was to leave its stamp on almost all the buildings even beyond 1800. Its decorative repertoire — abundant enough already — continued to be enriched and rearranged according to the Baroque taste which permeated the entire art of the

century. The artistic authority of the Brancoveanu period and especially the development of internal relations account for the diffusion of Wallachian architecture north and east of the Carpathians as a basis for a genuine national style. The fruitful viability of architecture, as of the entire Brancovan art actually, is also due to the fact that its promoters were country craftsmen. Gradually, its heritage of forms and decorative elements were assimilated even in the provincial areas, the symbiosis with folk art resulting in their perfect fusion.

The same as in previous centuries, during the 18th century the largest constructions were the fortified systems. However, if previously the fortifications of various types had had a preeminently defensive function, the great fortresses of the 18th century were mainly meant to reflect the hegemonical ambitions of the Austrian Empire and of the Porte. They had to ensure the submission of the Romanian countries. The huge walls were raised at the expense of the local people who were forced to process and transport the building materials, bring up the scaffoldings and make use of them themselves. Therefore, while by their military and representation programme these fortresses belonged to the dominating empires, from the viewpoint of their actual achievement they belonged to the local communities.

The fortress in Alba Iulia was to be the cornerstone of the vast fortifications system the Austrians planned out for Transylvania. It was built on the initiative of Prince Eugene of Savoy on a plan that observed Vauban's system, and it included the old town citadel as well, thus covering more than 173 acres (700,000 sq. m.). Its walls were 2.5 m. thick at the bottom and 1.2 m. at the top, and 10—12 m h. The building works were carried out by approximately 20,000 local serfs during 1715—1738. Designed by the Italian architect Giovanni Morando Visconti, Alba Iulia citadel is one of the best interpretations of the Vauban system of fortifications.

The bastionary fortress of Timișoara had also been of extremely large dimensions, covering almost 50 acres (2,000,000 sq.m.). It had nine large bastions and seven medium-sized ones. Other bastionary fortications the Austrians built in Arad, Deva, Turnu Roșu and Miercurea Ciuc.

The Ottoman Empire attempted a consolidation of its positions by building vast bastionary fortifications around the older citadels on the Danube (Turnu Măgurele, Giurgiu, Brăila) and the Dniester (Tighina). The extension works at Tighina were carried out by a very large number of day labourers from Moldavia, under the very supervision of Moldavia's Prince. The fortress had ten bastions and eleven towers and was also defended by large earthen walls and moats.

The 18th century also saw the spread of other kinds of defensive constructions specific for the boyar courts and fortified monasteries. Characteristic of the time were the country houses of the so-called "cula" type — tower-like fortified boyar mansions (< Turkish *kula* — tower). As for the fortified boyar courts, it is useful to note the similitude which verges on identity between the solutions adopted in Wallachia and Moldavia. They allowed a square plan, with thick brick walls of about 100 m. in length and seldom over 3 m. in hight provided with circular corner towers. Similar enclosures surrounded some of the monasteries dating from this century.

The first 18th century civil monuments of reference were initiated by Prince Constantin Brancoveanu in Tîrgoviște, Bucharest and other localities. Thus, in 1702, the Prince rebuilt the old houses of Mogoșoaia near Bucharest

into a real palace which he intended as a present for his son Ştefan. As with the Potlogi palace, the living quarters are placed over the tall cellar with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, and can be reached at from the main courtyard through a terrace provided with a monumental stairway. There is a *loggia* on the opposite façade, looking on to the lake. The rich carved decoration is influenced by the Late Renaissance and Baroque stylistic forms. The *loggia* with its trilobated arcades on columns decorated with torsades and composite capitals, and with its balustrade in openwork, is the most representative part of the entire edifice. The resemblance between the *loggia* of Mogoşoaia and the *loggiae* of certain Venetian and Dalmatian palaces has long been noticed. It is due to the interest the epoch's intelligentsia took in Italian culture as well as to the fact that the stonemasons employed for the task were Dalmatian. Particularly important is also the terrace over the main entrance: trilobated arcades with stone columns, composite capitals and balustrades in openwork recall the Italian models; yet the vault painted in fresco with floral patterns of Ottoman origin points to the eclectic character of the period. Despite its rich and eclectic ornaments the palace of Mogoşoaia is an imposing edifice with well-balanced harmonious forms and a clear architectural composition splendidly set off by the environment.

The palace of Doiceşti, built by Constantin Brancoveanu in 1706, or the Episcopal Palace of Buzău reveal the same architectural and decorative principles the Prince consistently applied to all his residences (including the palace at Sîmbăta in the south of Transylvania, where there is also an important church built by his family). Many later buildings were to turn to good account the example of the Brancovan palaces by faithfully preserving their plan, composition and ornamentation. Their recurrence points to the establishment of a well-defined style. Therefore, it is not surprising that henceforward a new type of house — with a balcony and an open galery, sometimes made of wood — was to enjoy an ever wider spread.

A type of building characteristic of the 18th century was the tower-like fortified mansion, i.e. the so-called "cula". It enjoyed wide spread especially in Oltenia (Măldăreşti, Vîlcea county; Şiacu and Curtişoara, Gorj county etc.), and in western Wallachia. Beyond inherent variations of form, the *cula* mansions are surprisingly unitary in point of planimetry and elevation. Usually, they have two or three storeys, seldom four, built on a square or rectangular plan. The groundfloor (often vaulted or ceiled with strong beams) was used as a cellar while the living quarters were built right over it. What turned these houses into fortified dwellings were the thick walls, the small windows and mainly the narrow loopholes. In contrast with these defensive developments, the uppermost floor always had a large terrace with arcades on brick columns or an wooden pilasters. The terrace give the *cula* mansions particulary originality when compared to the tower dwellings in the Balkans and in other parts of Europe. They were an adaptation of the Brancovan terraces and *loggias* to the taste of the country masterbuilders who had long been familiar with the peasant houses verandahs and porches.

Numerous peasant houses were influenced by the architecture of the *cula* mansions from which they took over the fortification developments while still preserving the usual form of the two-storeyed dwelling.

North of the Carpathians, the aristocracy, no longer concerned with self-defence as they were protected by the Imperial authorities, entirely gave up fortifying their castles. Instead they acquired a taste for sprawling resi-

dences surrounded by large parks decorated with statues and fountains in the Baroque style. The façades decoration was still austere, only timidly displaying simplified and provincialized Baroque elements.

The castle of Gornești (Mureș county), correctly attributed to architect Andreas Meyerhoffer of Salzburg, is a building of well-balanced proportions, with carefully articulated decorative elements, with flat rustic stoneworks on the groundfloor and rich Baroque window-frames. The surrounding park, with tress of various kinds and allegorical statues enhance the Baroque air of the castle. These features were common for the other palaces built during the period.

The palace in Oradea — today the Museum of the Land of the Criș Rivers — designed by arhitect Franz Anton Hillebrand to be the seat of the Bishopric, is an edifice of large dimensions consisting of a central part and two wings. The building spans over four floors: a huge vaulted cellar, a groundfloor with the façades in rustic stonework, a second story comprising several reception halls lavishly decorated in fresco and in stucco, and a third story built into the living quarters proper. The façade of the second story is remarkable for its window-frames. The arrangement of the façade ornaments is well-balanced, the rhythmical display of the pilasters and window-frames makes up a rich yet skilfully toned down composition.

The Bánffy palace — today the Cluj-Napoca Art Museum — was built on a more complex plan during 1774—1785. Its designer was Johann Eberhardt Blaumann, an architect and sculptor from Württemberg who settled down in Sibiu. The palace was erected on a rectangular plan, with a vast inner courtyard and vaulted passages on the western and eastern sides. The courtyard is surrounded by a double gallery with arcades and brick pilasters on the groundfloor and columns on the upper floor. The Bánffy palace served as model for the Mikes house (1790) and for the Teleki palace (1790—95), both of them smaller in size. The latter was designed by architect Joseph Leder of Cluj.

Architect Anton Eckhart Martinelli was the designer of the Brukenthal palace (1778—1785) in Sibiu. The lay-out of the palace is rectangular, with a main inner courtyard from which a second courtyard can be reached at through a vaulted gateway. The palace is a three-storied building with the vaulted rooms on the groundfloor planned as servants' quarters and various annexes, and the other two floors designed as the residence proper. The characteristic of the façade is that it lacks a dominant volume to mark the main entrance. The two residential stories are rhythmically decorated with colossal pilasters which give extra unity to the composition whose Baroque appearance is enhanced by the window-frames and the cornice adorned with bands of carved garlands.

Among the numerous Baroque residences we should mention the castle of Hodod (1771—1776) designed by architect Joseph Litzman, and the castle of Bonțida (Cluj county). This latter one was added a large U-shaped part on one of its sides, blanked by stables and servants' rooms on one of its sides. The balustrades of the palace terraces were adorned with stone statues carved (1784—53) by Johann Nachtigal of Cluj.

The numerous *curiae* (manor-castles) in Transylvania often recall the country houses in Wallachia and Moldavia. Thus, for instance, the *curia* in Tioltiur (Cluj county), built by stonemason David Sipoș, was provided with a verandah and staircase. The *curia* in Sîntimbru (Harghita county) is pretty similar in shape. Following the example of the aristocracy, the wealthy

townsfolk (in Cluj, Braşov, Sibiu, Tîrgu Mureş) also adopted architectural forms and decorations of obvious Baroque influence. Several houses built in a simplified Baroque style adapted to the local stonemansons' craft can still be seen at Gherla. The Baroque civil architecture penetrated the Romanian milieu in Transylvania as well. The first construction in this style were the schoolbuilding (and the building of the Episcopal Seat) in Blaj and the schoolbuilding in Braşov. This latter one (1760), erected near St. Nichola's Church in the district of Şchei, reveals an expressive adaptation of the Baroque forms to the local taste in that it was provided with a verandah with a staircase, a frequent architectural element throughout the Romanian countries.

A representative phenomenon for the 18th century was the spread of utilitarian buildings. Most of them employed Baroque decorative forms, yet solutions of Ottoman origin were also maintained at times. Following the growth of agriculture, large granaries began to be built in Transylvania. They were elongated rectangular constructions with double-sloping roofs and large entrance doors at the two smaller sides to allow the carts in. These doors were often decorated with Baroque gables (Răscruci, Cluj county; Sînpaul, Mureş county etc.). It is this type of granaries that seems to have inspired the large inns built on the main roads of Moldavia in the effort to re-organize the transports and the post (Buhuşi, Bacău county; Tupilaţi, Neamţ county etc.).

In Wallachia, inns were preferred with very large inner courtyards and with the guest rooms, stables and warehouses placed all around them. The most representative building of this kind — actually the only one preserved to this day — is Manuc's Inn in Bucharest. It was erected in 1808 and incorporated one of the buildings belonging to the neighbouring *Curtea Veche* Palace. The inn was large, its inner courtyard was enclosed by its four wings, each of them provided with high-ceilinged cellars and storerooms on the groundfloor. The two stories housed the guest-roms which were reached at through galleries built with arcades on wooden pilars. Manuc's Inn is a belated yet representative example of confluence with the forms of the Ottoman or Islamic architecture that had spread all over the Balkan Peninsula.

In the 18th century ornamental fountains grew more and more numerous, some of them being of public use. The most beautiful specimens, preserved in Iaşi, are Baroque in style yet influenced by Ottoman architecture. Such are the fountains standing on both sides of the entrance to St. Spiridon Hospital (1765) or the fountain at Golia Monastery. Of the same family though more modest in appearance, are the fountains of the boyar court at Goleşti (Argeş county), in Wallachia.

The 17th century closed in the splendid flourishing of the Brancovan style, which had reached its acme in the majestic monastic complex of Hurez. The 18th century opened in the same Brancovan style. Yet in a few years only important mutations had occurred in the artistic taste. They triggered changes in the aspect of edifices, stress being laid now on enriching the range of the Baroque ornaments. Although seriously damaged by earthquakes and fires in the 19th century, the New St. George Church built (1703—1706) in Bucharest, allows for a re-assessment of its value for Wallachian architecture based on the study of engravings and recently supplied archaeological data. Undoubtedly it was the most important church founded by Constantin Brancoveanu. Its obvious general resemblance to the big church of Hurez is explained by the fact that construction works were carried out by the same team of builders. Novelty here lies in the vaulting system of the pronaos which

is supported in the middle by four big columns richly decorated with plant motifs. The porch stone columns with twisted shafts and composite capitals add an exuberant decoration ot the façade in which the taste for the Baroque is easily detectable.

A step forward was the church of the Antim Monastery, founded by Metropolitan Antim Ivireanu in 1713—1714. The porch columns, their bases adorned with floral motifs and their composite capitals, also make the main decoration of the façades initially plastered all over and painted with plant motifs. Inside the church, besides the traditional murals, we should also mention the stone-carved altar screen entirely decorated with floral motifs, part of which seems to have been executed by the founder himself.

Although built a few years after Constantin Brâncoveanu's death, under Nicolae Mavrocordat, the first Phanariot Prince, the Văcărești Monastery (1716—1722) can be considered a genuine testament of Brâncovan art as it cumulated all the important experiments of the previous epoch. The big church of the monastery closely resembled the New St. George Church particularly in the reiteration of the grain vaulted pronaos. The remarkably well — preserved stone columns were entirely covered with a gorgeous tracery of swirling plant stems, wonderful masterpieces of stone carving. The large porch had tripartite arcades, stone columns with tall bases adorned with plant stems, and Corinthian capitals. The Metropolitan Church of Curtea de Argeș had been copied in two steeples rising over the porch and in the division of the façade into two registers by a cable moulding carved with garlands. Swirling stalks patterns adorned the window-frames and portals. The whole decoration, carved and painted, bore the stamp of the taste for an elaborate, abundant ornament.

The Văcărești Monastery had been the greatest monastic complex of the 18th century. It faithfully reiterated the Hurez Monastery in architectural programme and composition. It cumulated the functions of monastery and princely residence. In the centre of the large rectangular courtyard stood the solid volume of the big church. The Prince's house, a smaller copy of the Mogoșoaia Palace, and the abbot's house stood at the eastern corners, while at the western ones stood the identical buildings of the kitchen and the bakery. The gate tower, flanked by two rows of cells, stood halfway down the western side of the courtyard. Later on, in 1729, a chapel was built at the middle of the eastern side and the two houses were joined through a two—storeyed gallery with arcades on brick columns.

In 1988, this splendid complex has been demolished by an order of the communist dictatorship; today the architects are studying new plans of rebuilding the monument.

Other notable monastic complexes were built at Mera (Vrancea county), Aninoasa (Argeș county), Berislăvești, Șerbănești (Vîlcea county), Răchitoasa (Bacău county) etc.

The prestige of the Brancovan architecture accounts for the numerous monuments erected all over the territory of Romanian culture, moreover so as sometimes they were clearly built by craftsmen coming from Wallachia. In Moldavia, the church of the Mera Monastery built in 1706 by Prince Antioh Cantemir, while still recalling the Dragomirna shapes here and there, clearly outlines the Wallachian influence in the treatment of the porch and of the façades decoration. This influence is traceable with other Moldavian churches as well. In Transylvania alongside the church of the Sîmbăta de Sus Monastery founded by Brancoveanu himself, other 18th century monuments also have their façades decorated with Wallachian elements.

It is quite natural that in Wallachia the Brancovan architectural heritage was better assimilated. Thus scores of ecclesiastical monuments adopted and interpreted the already traditional forms and made frequent use of the decorative devices created during Constantin Brancoveanu's reign. In this respect, Bucharest churches such as Cretzulescu (1720—1722), Stavropoleos (1724—1728), Elefterie Vechi (1741—1742) and Olari (1752) are both representative and of extreme value.

Numberless churches built by the village communities, merchant guilds or country squires, clearly illustrate their ambition to assert themselves this way. Although more often than not the country master builders started from Brancovan models, their churches display a crude vigour. They all have a bell-tower over the pronaos and a porch with brick columns. The carved decoration combines with rich paintings on religious themes and even on lay ones. Plant motifs are also used as ornaments.

In Transylvania, the Baroque as the style employed by the official Austrian architecture, was imposed in an organized way first through the Jesuit churches built in rapid succession in almost all the large cities: in Cluj (1718—1728), Braşov (1718), Sibiu (1725), Tîrgu Mureş (1728—1750) etc. The Jesuit church in Cluj is an austere, carefully built structure. The western façade is dominated by two massive towers with a tall pediment inbetween, flanked by volutes. The crowning elements stand out only above the cornices, since under the cornices the composition of the façade is relatively unitary even though the edges of the towers are set out by tall pilasters with cornices of their own. The interior is of the basilica type with lateral tribunes. It offerrs a gradual succession of plans and stage effects on account of the various pilasters and the undulating tribunes banisters, everything shaped to suit the Baroque decorative register.

A more sophisticated Baroque architecture is displayed by the Roman-Catholic Cathedral in Timişoara. It was built during 1736—54 presumably — though there is no documentary evidence for this — by the great architect Emmanuel Fischer von Erlach. The cathedral was designed as a basilica structure with the aisles turned into chapels and the eastern side provided with a transept and a choir. The western façade is flanked by two not very tall, with a windowed pediment in between which gives unity and equilibrium to the crowning. The façades are ornamented with pilasters, cornices, window-frames with triangular or semicircle pediments. Although rich, the façades composition is well-balanced, devoid of the disruptive effects that often characterize Baroque architecture.

Built between 1750—1779 from the Viennese architect Franz Anton Hillebrandt's plans and under his supervision, the Roman-Catholic Cathedral in Oradea is a basilica of large dimensions with three naves and a transept, and tribunes on the western side and above the lateral naves. The western façade is flanked by two slanting towers which give the volumetric composition a typically Baroque dynamics, though the architecture is generally quiet, foreshadowing an early contamination by the Neo-Classical architecture (especially in the central register of the western façade).

The Baroque architecture of Austrian origin was introduced to the Romanian Transylvanian milieu through the Uniate Church. The seat of its bishopric in Blaj was provided with a cathedral designed by the Viennese architect Anton Eckhardt Martinelli and built between 1738-65. It is a one-nave church vaulted with semispherical calottes disposed along the longitudinal axis, recalling the traditional Orthodox architecture. The façade is flanked

by two large towers with a pediment in between. The church of the Dormition of the Virgin (1759—1766), in Lugoj, has two similar western towers. However, generally the designers of Orthodox churches preferred the one-western-tower variant, of the type of the Orthodox Cathedral in Oradea (1774—80). Its builder, the architect Jacob Eder, had been asked to adapt the Baroque forms to a typically Orthodox religious programme which he did by providing the nave with small lateral apses. The Orthodox church in Beiuș (1784—1790) is related to the cathedral in Oradea; yet, due to the rounding of its sides towards the tower, it gains more movement in the composition of the western façade. The rapid adjustment of the Baroque architecture to the requirements of the Romanian Orthodox background, both in terms of new forms and in simplified ornaments, is highly significant. Often enough the Baroque architecture was compelled to appeal to a tripartite lay-out with a porch on the western façade, especially in the Banat and in Țara Bîrsei. Most of the Orthodox churches north of the Carpathians feature the assimilation of the Baroque forms with the one-nave and western bell-tower type of building which is dominating the epoch.

Thus, towards the end of the 18th century, the Baroque architecture can be said to have been fully integrated into the Romanian environment in Transylvania both in towns and in rural areas. Moreover, local interpretations allow for the delimitation of a specific stylistic group.

In Moldavia, where the first half of the 18th century had been especially responsive to the novelties of the Brancovan architecture, a sudden openness to the Baroque emerged starting 1761. This was the year when the St. George's church of the old Metropolitan Seat, the Talpalari and the Saints Theodores churches were being built in Iași. Beyond differences in their lay-out and geometry these edifices are surprisingly unitary in terms of Baroque ornaments. The lay-out of these three churches is tripartite with a bell-tower and a groundfloor porch on the western side. With the Saints Theodores church the naos is hightened by a cupola supported by typically Moldavian slanting arches in tiers and by a corolla of small arches that recall the solution adopted at Golia. The cupola over the naos and the old vaultings of St. George's church have collapsed. However, the open porch with its massive stone columns embellished with floral motifs in relief, and with its composite capitals has recently been brought to light from under the masonry concealing it. The decoration of the porch columns is typically Baroque, yet in perfect harmony with the façades architecture which resorts to elements recalling both Dragomirna and Golia, and also introduces ornaments in the Oriental taste.

Unlike the severe and forbidding Baroque imposed by the Austrians in Transylvania, the Moldavian Baroque is exuberant and full of life, displaying a remarkable imagination in handling the decorative forms. The three monuments in Iași were soon followed by others in the Neamț, Bacău, Botoșani and Iași counties.

Concomitantly with the monuments whose façades were adorned with florid Baroque ornaments, in Moldavia simpler edifices were also built. They were representative of the manner in which the country master builders respected traditional forms. An expressively archaic monument is the church in the cemetery of Sucevița (1772). This building of a primitive charm, surprisingly enough resumes the forms specific for the 15th and 16th centuries Moldavia.

During the 18th century sculpture was still subjected to the restrictions of the Christian Orthodox religion which forbade graven images. Therefore

it had mostly a decorative function with a fair share in columns, balustrades, window and portal frames as well as in tombstones as a traditional domain.

During the early decades of the century, under the undisputed authority of the Brancovan style, numerous monuments were adorned with stone-carved decorations. Stonemason Vucaşin Caragea, the main sculptor at Court, was commissioned to decorate the great Bucharest churches of St. John "the Greek" and St. George the New. The columns with twisted shafts, Corinthian capitals and bases in plant motifs bestowed a particular decorative exuberance upon the St. George the New Church, in keeping with the society's growing taste for the Baroque art. Garlands were used abundantly in decorating window and portal frames. Their most frequent floral motifs were the pumpkin flower, the acanthus leaves and the tulip. Anthropomorphous elements were scarce, though animal motifs — the lion, the hart — were also represented at times. The great stone columns of the pronaos constitute an exceptional work of art indeed. Alongside the pronaos columns of the Stavropoleos church they represent the appex of decorative exuberance. Though Baroque as a whole, they manage to preserve a certain equilibrium and a sort of compositional temperance full of refinement. The columns with twisted shafts of the *loggia* the balustrades in open work of the Mogoşoaia Palace, seem to have been hand carved by the same team of craftsmen who were to work at Doiceşti and perhaps at the church of the Antim Monastery afterwards. With that latter monument the columns of the porticoes in front of the monks' cells deserve special mention due to the beauty of their forms.

Animal and plant motifs adorn the fretted balustrade of the Stavropoleos church, while the central field is taken up by a representation of Samson fighting the lion. Samson's figure is also the subject of a tridimensional piece of sculpture. Actually he is portrayed as a Titan supporting the vaults of the refectory of the former monastery in Rîmnicu Sărat (northeast-eastern Wallachia). This is the earliest statue of large dimensions representing a human figure. There is no doubt, however, that its author was a local craftsman not yet familiar with such difficult themes. This is all the more significant as was produced in an epoch when art was just beginning to break away from the old restraints.

The columns, portals, window frames and the fretwork of the airholes that embellished the numerous monuments in Wallachia, faithfully imitate the Brancovan models sometimes, though in certain cases it is obvious that the craftsmen preferred simplified, almost folkish interpretations. Yet, the most outstanding ensemble of decorative stone carving is the so-called Dionisie's terrace worked out by master stonecutter Iosif at the Hurez Monastery in 1750. The Baroque character of the composition is obvious both in the wealth of ornaments and in the strong relief of the torsades on the column shafts. The balustrades in open work are decorated with animal, plant and heraldic motifs treated freely and with delightful imagination. It is noteworthy that the arms of Moldavia and Wallachia were joined in the same carving although the terrace was not built on the initiative of a prince reigning in both principalities.

In Moldavia, where at the beginning of the century window frames in Moldavian Gothic style were still in use, ornamental swirling stems spread a little later. Initially they were interpreted like those in Wallachia. Starting with the Iaşi St. George's and St. Theodore's churches — both of 1761 — the plant motifs on the window frames acquired an Oriental Baroque

aspect in keeping with the entire decoration of the façades. Ornamental cartouches in Oriental Baroque also decorate the fountains at the Spiridonie and Golia monasteries (1765—1766).

In Transylvania, the most important decorative sculptures were the work of David Sipos a master supposed to have worked in Wallachia as well. The assumption seems to be comfirmed by that master's specific ornamental repertoire and relief technique, which are quite similar to the decorative sculpture in Wallachia. The window frames at "the silversmith's house" in Cluj (1724), as decorated with meandering stems and the owner's emblem in the centre are obviously related to the Brancovan frames. Swirling stalks also decorate the pulpits carved by David Sipos for the Protestant churches in Bonțida (1720), Mînăstireni (1752), Dej (1752), and for the Roman-Catholic church in Chidea (1741).

The establishment of the Baroque architecture as the official architecture in Transylvania also accounts for the emergence of figurative sculpture in the round. The first important workshop of the kind was set up in Cluj where Johann König from Bavaria had been working ever since the 1720s. The statues of St. Ignatius and St. Xaverius decorating the façade of the Jesuit church in Cluj are attributed to him. Their composition which follows several axes, their agitated movements and the attitudes of an affected dramatism are features betraying the usual vision of the Baroque. After 1724, König worked in Alba Iulia where he executed the sculptures decorating the monumental gates of the city. He also carved the four statues adorning the façade of the Roman-Catholic Cathedral. During 1743—1747, back in Cluj he worked out the monumental gates of St. Michael's church, placing several statues of saints on their crowning front. The rhetorical atitudes enhanced by the wide embracing gestures and the billowing folds are in perfect harmony with the elaborate architecture of these gates. Unfortunately, they were dismantled in the 19th century and only partially preserved in front of St. Peter's Church of the same town. From existing photographs, Johann König's monumental work can be considered the peak of the Baroque sculpture in Transylvania.

In 1740, Johann Nachtigall and Anton Schuchbauer were commissioned the pulpit of St. Michael's Church in Cluj. Nachtigall worked out the staircase and body of the pulpit employing a rich decoration of figurative reliefs inspired by the New Testament. The canopy of the pulpit, surrounded by flying angels was carved by Schuchbauer. Despite the overabundance of iconographic and decorative elements, the composition of the pulpit is markedly coherent, its details are skilfully executed, the finishing touches pointing to the wide experience of these masters.

Nachtigall is also the author of the statues that adorn the façade of the Franciscan Church in Cluj: *the Virgin*, *St. Anthony of Padua* and *St. Hieronymus* (1740—1747). Carefully executed, these works display the exalted and even exaggerated expression peculiar to the Baroque statuary. Anton Schuchbauer executed the monument of *Our Lady of Succour* in Cluj in 1744 after the extinction of a plague epidemic. In Cluj again, Schuchbauer carved the statues adorning the attic of the Banfy palace, inspired by the Greek and Roman mythology. Their conventional character suggests that they may have been made by some of the master's apprentices.

In the second half of the 18th century Baroque statues came into fashion; some were designed to adorn the residential parks, others decorated various buildings and others still were placed in front of churches.

The numerous wood sculptures decorating the altars of the Roman-Catholic churches in the regions inhabited by Szecklers in eastern Transylvania are still insufficiently studied. Several wood-cravers' workshops must have existed in this part of the country, especially in the towns of Miercurea Ciuc and Odorhei.

More than any other contemporary cultural phenomenon, the 18th century painting illustrates the process of emancipation of the lower and middle classes, their aspirations towards freedom and social justice being accompanied by the need for beauty. Incredibly numerous, the murals, the icons on wood and glass set the art of the whole century under the aegis of the pictorial, a characteristic feature marked by exuberance and ceaselessly enlivened by the folk artists. The Brancovan school of painting exerted a deep influence. During the first decades of the century the master painters trained at Hurez created some excellent mural paintings. Their apprentices were to carry on the secrets of a fascinating craft.

The murals painted by masters Preda, Ianache, Sima and Mihai at Cozia rates among the most valuable mural ensembles of the beginning of the century. They decorate the naos, the altar and the porch of the big church at the Cozia Monastery (1704—1705). The subdued colouring, the refined elegance of the line, the noble beauty of the personages with their elongated bodies and rich vestments, and especially the well-balanced composition, contribute to the solemn majesty of these murals.

In 1702, Constantinos, together with several master painters of Hurez — Andrei, Simion, Istrati and Hranite — painted the church of the Polovraci Monastery. On the eastern wall of the porch they gave a detailed but conventional image of Mount Athos, with its many monasteries, with paths and monks walking on them, everything in a simplifying vision, in the spirit of the symbolic landscapes of Byzantine tradition. As based on an engraving widely circulated in the Christian East, the landscape at Polovraci (actually preceded by similar ones in the metropolitan palace of Tîrgoviște recorded ever since 1665) was an unsual event for the church painting and a bold infringement of the iconographic canons.

The murals completed by Andrei, Iosif, Hranite and Ștefan for the church of the Surpatele hermitage (1706) are gay and brilliant, in keeping with the graceful architecture of the building. Of great worth are the murals painted by Preda and Ianache at the church of the "*Dintr-un Lemn*" Monastery (1715), as well as those bearing the signature of Teodosie, Gheorghe and Preda in the church of the Sărăcinești hermitage (1718).

In 1708, a team of painters headed by Preda was sent over north of the Carpathians to decorate St. Nicholas' Church founded by Constantin Brâncoveanu in the town of Făgăraș. This was an important event for beyond the intrinsic value of the paintings: they were also the starting point for the spreading of Brancovan art all over Transylvania, the Hapsburg oppression and the restrictions imposed upon the Orthodox Romanians being unable to put a stop to the intense circulation of the painters, and to prevent the setting up of a real artistic community.

Beyond the numerous local particularities, the complex phenomenon of the century Romanian painting shows many convergent features in point of iconographic programmes and formal interpretation. We should mention the interest taken in rendering the human faces, the portrait painting being facilitated by the great group portraits. The 18ht century portrait painting should be regarded as a real prologue to the complete laicization of the arts

occurring in the century to follow. The entire development of autochthonous 18th century painting paved the way towards an art freed from canons and created on private commissions. A good example in that respect is the fine votive painting in the church of the Mărcuța Monastery. Its anonymous author presented the family of Prince Grigore III Ghica (1768—1769) with all their princely attributes in the spirit of a genuine period portrait.

The new fashion of painting the portraits of aristocratic ladies and of townswomen not without a tinge of humour — the manner in which saints were painted. On the façades of the church in Hurez-Tîrg, for instance, the delightful procession of sybils and philosophers looks rather like a row of plumpy ladies in rather low-necked dresses and of petty squires crushed under the weight of their crows (painted by Manole and Dinu of Craiova in 1807). Another genuine characteristic of the 18th century painting is the delight in the narrative. Sometimes it is expressed in scenes of an exuberant imagination, the religious images being smothered by secondary episodes which enable the painters to depict scenes from everyday life. On the southern façade of St. Paraskeva's church in Rășinari near Sibiu painter Ion Grigore introduced in his *Nativity* a truly local genre scene, with shepherds and women wearing the national costume specific to the people of the place.

The attraction for illustrated stories which accounts for the wide circulation of popular books such as *Esopia*, *Alexăndria* etc. — has resulted, among others, in the depiction of hunting scenes or fables on the façades of churches. The highly appreciated *Esopia* was thus circulated in a new form, as the main fables could now be "read" by the entire village. Delightfully fresh are the fables illustrated by Iosif the Monk on the façades of the porch added to the infirmary chapel of the Bistrița Monastery (Vîlcea county, 1709) or the hunter portrayed by Dinu the Painter on the façade of Vovidenia church of Urșani (Vîlcea county, 1805).

Laicization as well as the growing interest in the immediate reality brought into religious painting an ever increasing number of satirical accents both moralizing and social, and strong touches of criticism aimed at oppressors of all kinds appeared in religious painting. Sometimes the satirical intention can be perceived even in the manner of painting the founders some other times the interpretation of the biblical scenes and of the saints legends evolves into social and political protest. Thus, in the church of Pietroșița (Dîmbovița county,) when illustrating the parable of "the rich man whose ground brought forth plentifully" the painters Constantin and Ioniță of Brașov employed the portrait of a local squire, fat and with a greedy countenance (1767). In other cases, the verdict the artists returned is implied in the clothes the personages in the biblical scenes wear. A frequent scene in the wooden churches of Maramureș is Nestor's fight with the giant Lie; the young saint is always depicted wearing the local peasant costume, while his opponent wears the uniform of a Hungarian hussar and has his moustaches thin and turned upwards, after the fashion of the time. Among Christ's oppressors, at the church fresco of Fofeldea (Sibiu county), the masters Grecu of Săsăuși painted Turks armed with firelocks and hussars of the Hapsburg army whereas Caiaphas was portrayed as a raging pasha (1814). Pieter Bruegel the Elder had done the same when representing Herod's soldiers — in *The Massacre of the Innocents* — as wearing the uniform of the Spanish soldiers who were devastating the Flemish villages at the time.

Similar to the Middle Ages in Western of Europe, the most scathing social and political criticism was to be found in the scenes of *The Last Judgement.* Among the sinners tortured by devils, were all those who oppressed the peasants. Such scenes, widely present in the village churches of Maramureș, the Apuseni Mountains and Oltenia, reveal the accumulation of the spirit of revolt which was to lead to the great peasant uprisings at the end of the 18th and at the beginning of the 15th centuries.

Another important characteristic of 18th century painting was its rusticisation. It did not exclude the assimilation of new stylistic features, particularly those deriving from the western Baroque which spread through the circulation of engravings. With the disintegration of feudalism — which for centuries had secured the development of painting based on the Middle Ages theological ideas — and with the emergence of the village communities and town guilds as founders of churches, religious painting changed its expression and entered the sphere of folk art. This was actually a time when folk art of all kinds flourished spectacularly: the architecture of the wooden churches reached its acme in the constructions of the Land of Lăpuș and Maramureș, in northern Transylvania; the first centers of icons on glass were set up; the peasant engravers became so numerous that they had to form a guild — at Gherla, in 1776 the Oltenian and Moldavian carpets were woven, displaying a whole world of beauty and imagination.

During the first half of the 18th century, when the painters trained at the Hurez school were still active master Iosif the Monk painted some beautiful icons at Alba Iulia (in 1716), while master Ștefan of Ocnele Mari, Oltenia, painted the icons for the iconostasis of the episcopal church in Blaj (1737). Those icons became models for the painters in the central parts of Transylvania, such as Toader, or the master painters in the village of Feisa (Alba aounty): Ilie and Vasile, Porfirie and Nicolae were mentioned in the second half of the century. To the school of Hurez belonged Andrei who, in 1730, together with his son Andrei, with Iovan and Chiriac, painted the murals of the Săraca Monastery (Timiș county). Thus, they completed the most beautiful murals in the Banat and laid the foundations of a genuine local school of painting which was to be developed by Vasile Diaconu of Tismana. Together with 50 other families, Vasile Diaconu moved over to the Banat and set up a workshop which contributed to the further development of painting in the region splendidly illustrated by icons on wood.

Radu Dascălu, son of painter Mihai of Tîrgoviște with whom he worked for a long time, carried on an intense activity. He drew up an album of two hundred models mostly inspired from the old frescoes of the Princely Church of Curtea de Argeș. He had had the opportunity to study that church thoroughly, as from 1759 to 1761 he had taken part in its restoration and repainting. He also painted a splendid frieze of portaits in the church of Gura Văii (1758), in which he also included his own portrait and that of Gheorghe, his apprentice.

Nedelcu Popovici was no doubt the most important master painter in the Banat in the 18th century. He had been trained in the stylistic ambience of the Brancovan painting and his activity covered several decades. In 1735 he painted the church in Lipova. Afterwards he started painting icons on wood for the iconostases of the churches in the Banat. A good draftsman and subtle colourist, Nedelcu proved responsive to the innovations brought over by the Baroque painting. Thus, in his icons he introduced thrones with

an elaborate architecture, and sumptuous vestments with minutely drawn ornaments which often vie with the faces of the personages.

In Moldavia, after its extraordinary flourishing during the 17th century, mural painting became rather stagnant and most of the churches were no longer decorated. The most important murals have been preserved in the church of Căușani (Bessarabia, after 1765); they are the work of a group of painters who seem to have come from Wallachia, and at any rate were under the influence of the Brancovan style.

The active circulation of master painters on both sides of the Carpathians resulted in the unification of their means of expression all over the country, in Oltenia, Wallachia, Transylvania, the Banat, and as far as the west and north of Transylvania and farther still, in the east of Moldavia. This common artistic fund gave rise to numerous local centres whose artistic productions were often closely related to the folk art. Sometimes those small centres were in fact the property of one family, they were workshops headed by one master painter; they often formed the nucleus of a new school. like those in Tîrgoviște, Cîmpulung, Craiova, Pitești, Brașov and many others. Worth mentioning are also the itinerant workshops, connected however to a particular area, which allowed the training of local painters under the guidance of a more prominent master.

When compared to the impetuous artistic movement of the local painters, the Baroque painting, favoured by the Austrian authorities and the upper echelons of the Transylvanian aristocracy proves alien and devoid of substance. In this respect it is therefore significant that most of the Baroque works were imported or carried out by foreign painters. Such was the Austrian painter Anton Steinwald, who settled down in Sibiu, where in 1774 he painted the altar walls of the Roman-Catholic church. He also decorated with ornamental murals the residences in Sibiu and Avrig of baron Samuel von Brukenthal, governor of Transylvania. The portraits of the three leaders of the great peasant uprising of 1784 — Horea, Cloșca and Crișan — are attributed to the same painter. Beyond their clumsiness, these portraits are of great documentary value as they present us with the figures of the three great heroes; at the same time they point to the assimiliation of the Baroque means of expression by the autochthonous milieu. However, the most important painter of Sibiu was Johann Martin Stock. Two portraits are attributed to him, *I.G. Fabritius* and *Governor Samuel von Brukenthal*, both of them carefully painted, yet conventional.

The spread of the printing press and the penetration of printed books even to the humblest village churches caused a serious loss of interest in the illuminated manuscripts. Henceforward this old traditional art was to be found only sporadically in the cultivated milieux. However, the high prices of the printed books compelled many poor calligraphers copy the books they could not afford. Their diligence was often accompanied by their wish to have the manuscripts embellished with initial letters and frontispices, and even with illustrations. Though these ornaments do not reach a high artistic level, they show an obvious concern for the aesthetic quality of the manuscripts. At the same time they show assimilation of the Baroque ornaments present mainly in the printed books and the engravings which enjoyed a wide enough circulation.

The copying of religious books was of secondary interest during the period. Instead, popular romances — which the clergy often banned — circulated especially in manuscript form. Their predominantly lay character

stimulated the copyists' imagination and enabled them to bring in scenes from the real life. Numerous manuscripts preserved in the great libraries reveal the names of many gifted copyists such as Costea Dascălu, Alexandru Cihodariu, Andrei Golțea, Gheorghe of Trîgoviște, Ioniță Arhip, Agapie of Chișinău, Ștefan of Putna, Luca Poenar, Constantin Copilu and many others.

One of the finest illuminated manuscripts is *Alixăndria* (The Book of Alexander), copied and embellished by Năstase Negrule of Iași in 1790. While closely following the fantastic adventures in the book, Negrule proves great gift invention, even though, in the absence of precise information about the exotic world in which the action of the story should take place, he resorted to the local landscape. His drawings blend a certain accuracy in expression with a clear distribution of colours. Of the numerous manuscripts that render the moralizing story *Varlaam și Ioasaf* (Balaam and Josaphat) worth mentioning is the copy made by Gheorghe, son of Priest Vasile of Tîrgoviște.

However, the finest and most suggestive illustrated manuscript of the 18th century is *Erotocritos* copied by chancellor Ioniță and illustrated by chancellor Petrache. Without taking into account the remote times in which the story is set, Petrache resorted to images from his contemporary world, the costumes being specific of the 18th century. He accurately rendered the heteroclite ambience of the Phanariot epoch, with its medley of oriental costumes, long mantles worn by the noblemen in contrast with the Austrian hussar costumes worn by the guard of the emperor. Oriental pavilions, Baroque coaches, banquets with the musicians playing the cembalo, the flute and also the violin, compositions in which one can trace the influence of western engravings, combine with others, influenced by Persian illustrations.

The 18th century embroidery was an art in decline, gradually superseded by the painting on wooden panels or canvas and the fabrics woven on mechanical looms. Irrespective of their destination, the pieces worked out during this period are predominantly decorative, using floral borders and heraldic emblems. Such is the pall made in 1704 for the tomb of Radu Iliaș, Constantin Brâncoveanu's son-in-law. Its ornamental composition seems to have been inspired by an Oriental carpet, with the Moldavian coat of arms embroidered in a medallion. A similar decorative piece of embroidery was worked out by order of Prince Ștefan Cantacuzino, in 1715. It has the bicephalous Byzantine eagle embroidered in the centre.

In Moldavia, strictly decorative iconostasis veils with wide borders in plant motifs and flower vases in the center were created concomitantly with the veils — with an iconographic programme that evince the attempts at re-establishing the ties with the old traditional embroideries. Sometimes, as with the liturgical veil at the Barnovschi church, (1734) the embroidery in gold, silver and silk threads endeavoured to suggest a painting, especially by the use of silk threads of various colours. The sumptuous *epitaphios* of the Văratec Monastery (1798) carried out on Metropolitan Iacob Stamate's initiative, is a real painting in needlework, suggesting both the spatial effects and the ornaments of a Baroque painting. Some pieces of embroidery of the beginning of the 19th century, were designed in the same spirit. They complete the evolution of an art which had reached its acme thanks to the generous donations of Stephen the Great and Neagoe Basarab in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Similar to other genres of art, silverware in the Romanian countries during the 18th century developed under the strong, beneficient influence of the Brancovan epoch. For the main silversmithery centres in Transilvania,

Brașov and Sibiu, the comissions coming from Wallachia were a sure source of economic growth. They determined the Saxon silversmiths to adapt to the taste and programme imposed by their Wallachian clientèle. Some of the Saxon craftsmen settled down in Bucharest. Thus, for instance, Georg Heltner left Brașov in 1691, as he preferred to be excluded from the guild rather than give up his commissions. Early in the 18th century, Peter Hemsech II or Georg May II worked at the court of Constantin Brâncoveanu for a time. In point of style their creations perfectly integrated with the artistic environment in Wallachia. Despite the gradual assimilation of both Western Baroque and Ottoman decorative elements, the silverware of the 18th century presents a certain stylistic unity due to the penetration of ornamental forms established during Constantin Brâncoveanu's epoch. As a matter of fact, during the first two decades of the 18th century, outstanding silversmiths such as Sebastian Hann and Georg May II made the very pieces considered to be the masterpieces of Brancovan silverware, worthy models for the generations of silversmiths to follow.

Alongside the Transylvanian masters, those in Wallachia and Moldavia worked out numerous silver objects; with some of them the Oriental decorative elements are quite perceptible. One of the last prominent representatives of silverwork — a flourishing art in the past — was Gheorghe, son of Răducanu, the author of the beautiful portable candlestick of the Bistrița Monastery (1765). Another monumental candlestick was made by silversmith Hristea Ionotu for the same monastery in 1779.

After reading the documents of the time and examining the engravings that have come down to us, we can draw the conclusion that the Oriental taste prevailed in the decoration of the boyars' residences in Wallachia. Many carpets, confortable sofas, cushions scattered all over the place made up for the absence of the usual pieces of furniture, whereas clothes trunks and niches built in the thick walls replaced wardrobes. In contrast to the Oriental taste these interiors illustrate, a peculiar idea of comfort; the pieces of art furniture which have come down to us reveal a much more complex reality as the strong traditional fund is enriched by Oriental, Western and Baroque forms.

The great effort to assimilate and synthesize new elements characteristic of the Brancovan epoch can be easily detected in the pieces of furniture as well. The doors of the chapel and of the refectory at the Hurez Monastery, the doors of the church of the Surpatele Monastery, the armchairs in the big church of the Hurez Monastery, the pews of Colțea Church and many others stand out by their simple, rigourously organized composition and by their abundant decoration in plant motifs. They were worked out in low relief with a remarkable command of the design and of the detailed modelling. As such these pieces point to the fact that reality has served as a model being integrated to a geometric pattern, and this corresponds to the traditional autochthonous way of interpretation. Similar in principle, yet with a more elaborate decoration in plant and heraldic motifs, the doors of the Cotroceni (1707), Antim (c. 1715), and Stavropoleos churches show a marked inclination towards the Baroque.

In the case of iconostases we must stress upon the variety of means employed (carving, fretwork, gilding, polychrome effects) as well as the wealth of ornaments consisting of elements inspired from arhitecture, and plant, zoomorphic and even anthropomorphous motifs.

In the second half of the 18th century, the carved iconostases the increasing demand for the opening of several specialized workshops (in Bucharest, Craiova, Brașov, Iași, Suceava etc.) and at the same time to the diversification of decorative modalities, Baroque, Rococo and Oriental. With the small workships, the adoption of a more elaborate decoration gave rise to freely interpreted compositions, evincing a rich imagination and leading to a genuine local synthesis.

The same Baroque interpretation can be traced in the ornaments of certain pieces of furniture such as armchairs or lecterns. This was to become even more obvious early in the following century when not only the ornaments, but the general forms as well were governed by the Baroque patterns.

At the turn of the century, Romanian art possessed all the characteristic features heralding the transition to a new epoch. The old traditional artistic forms which the aristocracy had so stubbornly cultivated, were less and less able to express the aspirations of a society on its way to a complete transformation. The modern styles of the West — the Renaissance and the Baroque had each in its turn exhausted their power of attraction. And even if the Baroque forms were still present the early years of the 19th century, they were always superseded by the Neo-classical style which was in full progress. The social emancipation of the lower and middle classes, and the desperate efforts of the upper classes to adapt to new times, imposed the need for a new artistic language able to express the ideals of a society for which immediate reality was of utmost value. The aspirations to freedom and national unity, the need to communicate with the world by removing the arbitrary barriers raised by the Ottoman, Czarist and Hapsburg Empires, the irresistible desire to gain freedom and progress were to lead to the great revolutions of the first half of the 19th century. Of course, during that century churches and monasteries were built as well, some even of really large dimensions, numerous murals and icons were painted, and pieces of decorative art perpetuating the traditional forms were achieved. On the other hand, owing to the many churches built in villages, the heritage of traditional art was to contribute to the progress of folk art. The peasant engravings, the icons on glass, the icons on wooden panels, the popular manuscripts were only one part of a multilateral and dynamic phenomenon which was as valuable even in its minutest achievements.

The year 1800 was not only a borderline between two centuries, but also between two great artistic periods. Even if in the 19th century phenomena of the traditional art could still be traced, they were no longer typical. Henceforward a new art was in the making, a young, vigorous art which was to participate in the social emancipation, unification and independence of the Romanians.

Neoclassical and Romantic Trends

In the early years of the 19th century there was no sign of any structural renewal as compared to the culture of the 18th century.

Closer relationships with Western Europe obviously did not cause a complete breakaway from the Levant, whose tradition fertilized for a long-time the artistic creation and civilization on the Romanian territory. This highly specific synthesis gave rise to the simultaneous appearance of quite different interpretations of the Baroque for instance.

The year 1800 is no doubt a conventional limit for the historical stages of culture in Romania, the same as in all European countries in fact. Of course, the overlapping and separation of the most varied tendencies did not occur more dramatically in the first decade of the 19th century than during the twilight of the 18th. The historical conditions peculiar to the evolution of Romanian art account for the more complex transformation of art at the beginning of the 19th century in Romania than in the West of Europe. We should reject, in the first place, the biased idea — which lasted for a long time in the history of Romanian culture — that the political condition of the Romanians in the three principalities subjected to social and national oppression, brought about a cultural isolation from the rest of the continent. It was considered that, because the few great men who grasped the significance of both the older and contemporary culture were unable to diffuse this within Romanian culture, closer contact with Western European influences was sporadic. However research work carried on in recent years, often based on comparative criteria, has demonstrated that such conclusions were superficial. It was therefore the history of visual arts which — more than any other domain of the history of culture — has offered arguments apt to prove the continuity of synchronism.

The Romanian poet and philosopher Lucian Blaga made the following remark which can serve as a guidemark when assessing the significance of the permanent assimilation of European culture: rejecting the Lutheran and Calvinist Reformation and opposing them programatically — by using a topical, apolemic iconography — Romanian culture has always observed however the basic principle for creation in the national language, the translation and printing of books in Romanian being an evidence of grasping a substance more profound than the dogmas of the Reformation contained, no matter their origin.

The European appartenance of Romanian culture manifested itself in a synthesis which rejected mimetism, fragmentary construction or the borrowing of heterogeneous elements. Belonging to the two great cultural areas — Byzantine and Western, the latter predominantly Romanic — the Romanian scholars selected and preserved from each the essential elements; without adhering — with very few exceptions — to the religious spirituality of Catholic Latinity, they declared already in the earliest chronicles they wrote, how proud they were to descend from Rome.

Coming closer to the West was a fundamental requirement of Romanian culture. The often mentioned aspiration to break away from the old patterns and to create new ones was already expressed in the early years of the 19th century. An important premise in this respect was created in the second decade of the century when in Iași (1813) and in Bucharest (1818) the courses of lectures began to be delivered in Romanian at the two universities set up at the beginning of the 18th century (in Iași) and at the end of the 17th (in Bucharest). The two *Princely Academies* as they were called did not give only technical training for engineers as provided for by the curricula, but they also disseminated the elements of national history; the Transylvanian professor Gheorghe Lazăr, from Bucharest soon gained recognition owing to his ideas influenced by the ideals of the French Revolution of 1789.

At the same time many young people from Wallachia and Moldavia pursued their studies in the West, increasing the number of the large section of Transylvanian intellectuals who had gone to Rome where they had the opportunity to study and draw their conclusions regarding the Latin charac-

ter of the Romanian language and the historical continuity of the Romanians on the territory north of the Danube. As a matter of fact, the signs of a new cultural period appeared earlier than in the other Romanian Lands.

Paradoxically enough apparently, Istanbul — which had become a cosmopolitan city where Oriental and Western forms of culture met — was one of the channels through which changes penetrated in the Romanian Lands. On the other hand, the reigning princes appointed by the Porte, most of them of Greek origin, were often cultivated people (although in many cases their clothing, furniture and taste for Levantine customs and habits concealed their appreciation of Europe). European artistic forms and ideas were circulated in Greek and through the Greek culture, a phenomenon intensified by a specific assimilation of influences coming from France, Italy, Russia — on her way to an intense cultural "Europenization" — and, in Transylvania, from Austria.

Nevertheless, the main factor leading to the reformulation of the basic principles of Romanian culture was, no doubt, the great elan — greater than in the past — of the movement for social and national liberation launched by the renewing forces in the Romanian society. A deeply significant moment is, for instance, the 1821 Revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu who had proclaimed in a vibrant, romantic prose the necessity of absolute social justice and of the restoration of an autochtonous government to replace the Phanariot reigning princes. News of Tudor's uprising spread to the other Romanian principalities; special measures were taken by the authorities in Transylvania, for instance, to put an end to the agitation which, here too, heralded the uprising of the peasants who wanted "to right the wrongs".

The appointment of native reigning princes was one of the important consequences of the 1821 revolution. Cultural life progressed at a steady pace. The Romanian school became a powerful centre enjoying the support of a new liberal generation. The setting up, in 1826, of a "Romanian Literary Society" was important not only from the cultural point of view, for the programme of the society — drawn up with a clear sense of priorities — included social demands as well, which — as historian C.C. Giurescu remarked — could be summed up as follows: liberty, culture, the abolition of the aristocrats' privileges.

The peace treaties concluded at Kuciuk -Kainardji (1774) and Adrianople (1829) which brought to an end two Russo-Turkish wars, granted Wallachia and Moldavia an increased autonomy, while the economic monopoly of the Porte was powerfully shaken. This brought about the rapid development of the Romanian bourgeoisie as early as the beginning of the 19th century. Ideas originating in Illuminism and, soon after, in the Western Romanticism, challenged the prejudices of the upper classes which were powerfully contested.

The means of artistic expression i.e. the classical orders — the Roman Doric, the Greek Doric and the Tuscan — were the most frequent in this country; suitable ornaments, vast spaces of harmonious proportions, brought the buildings down to a human scale. The appearance of classicism in the Romanian Lands did not bring about a total break with the past; it is common knowledge that the architecture which had previously developed on the present territory of Romania had taken over and interpreted classical forms. In Transylvania, the Renaissance, Baroque and Empire styles — all of them based on the interpretation of the forms of classical architecture — followed in succession like in all the other European countries, Moldavia too

became acquainted with classicism in the mid-17th century when the church of Golia monastery was built in Iași, subsequently serving as model for an important group of monuments. The Brancovan style in Wallachia, had assimilated a few clasical decorative elements characteristic of the Renaissance, alongside some principles of composition.

Gheorghe Curinschi Vorona, a historian of Romanian architecture, noted that in the development of classical architecture it is dificult to mark the limits of a period of mechanical adoption or reproduction of models or borrowed prototypes, as different from a period when they were interpreted in an autochthonous spirit. When certain monuments were built almost concomitantly, the principles of classicism influenced either all the components of the architecture as a whole or the decoration, its most mobile and receptive element; the other essential components of the form continued to be created in a traditional spirit.

One can notice however a tendency of ecclesiastical architecture to free itself from the domination of the old typological patterns, to draw nearer to lay architecture by using the same architectural means of expression in unison with lay architecture.

At the beginning of the 19th century classicism was particularly obvious in civil architecture; it was assimilated by the architecture of dwelling houses in towns and sometimes even by the cottages in the countryside.

Such adaptations of the traditional plan belong to a period which lasted until around 1830, when new buildings were erected in keeping with a programme clearly patterned on forms suited to a neo-classical conception.

Significantly enough, this is the period when the literary taste was predominantly neo-classical; this is clearly demonstrated by the numerous translations from Corneille, Voltaire, Fénelon, Montesquieu, Gessner, and by the tragedies and idyls performed on the stage.

Of the few monumental buildings of the time which have come down to us, special mention should be made of the palace erected on the shores of the Tei Lake (on the outskirts of Bucharest at the time) by reigning Prince Grigore Ghica IV (1822—1828). Of fine proportions and in the shape of a prism, the edifice consisted of a groundfloor treated "a rustica" and one storey, taller than the groundfloor, decorated with Corinthian pilasters supporting a frieze crowned by two triangular pediments on both wings. The palace of the wealthy Știrbei boyar family, today the Ceramics and Porcelain Museum, was erected during the same period, in the year 1835. Built on an asymmetrical plan designed by the French architect Sanjouand, the palace has a jutty decorated with Ionic columns; rows of colonettes are placed under the windows of the first storey. (Half a century later, a second floor was added and four caryatids were placed on its façade enhancing the neoclassical style of the edifice).

In Iași, the scholar Gheorghe Asachi, who trained in Italy to be an engineer and was also a writer (a romantic one), draftsman and founder of a literary magazine, organized at the "Academia Mihăileană" courses of architecture delivered by Singurov, a Russian, and by Alexandru Costinescu, a Romanian who had completed his studies in Vienna. Singurov made the plans of the Princely Palace in Iași (1841—1843) as well as the plan of reigning prince Mihail Sturza's residence. The latter edifice was one of the most stately edifices of the time, consisting of three wings in the shape of the letter enclosing the main court, with the front entrance along the axis of the wing in the middle.

Courses of lectures in architecture were delivered at "Sf. Sava" college in Bucharest by Carol Valștein, the drawing master of the school, who had been educated in Austria. In 1836, Valștein published *Elements of Drawing and Architecture*, a textbook which shows the interest in this profession of the young people educated at Romanian schools. Neo-classicism was to last for a long time; its stylistic elements were allways present in the important edifices of the larger towns of Wallachia and Moldavia almost until World War II broke out. Starting with the second half of the 19th century, smaller buildings, country mansions of the landowners and even the houses of the petty bourgeoisie were built in this style, besides town halls, schools, the seats of the law courts, the residences of the boyards and of the upper bourgeoisie.

The National Theatre, a monumental public building erected in Bucharest from 1846 to 1852, is also worth mentioning. The interior of the ample edifice was typically Italian, consisting of a spacious foyer, the auditorium with pit, boxes and gallery, the actors' dressing rooms and various workshops. The auditorium with its elegant hangings was one of the finest in Romania before World War II. Unfortunately, the National Theatre was destroyed during the German air raids in the summer of 1944.

Architecture in Transylvania developed along quite different lines. Neo-classicism here bears the stamp of the Empire style being more austere than its counterpart in the towns south and east of the Carpathians, for, in Transylvania, it came in the wake of a clearly expressed Baroque: the rigorous Neo-classical features were here quite different from the exuberant decoration of the Baroque. The few ornaments — pilasters, the profile of windows, balustrades — lend the façades of these edifices raised at the turn of the century a calm, majestic aspect springing from the severe treatment of the architectural ensemble.

The Empire style, which preceded Classicism, asserted itself in Transylvania around the year 1800; its appearance had been prepared by the evolution of the Baroque itself which, in the second half of the 18th century in Transylvania had not been characterized by an overabundance of ornaments; on the contrary it had used ever simpler means of expression with elements already heralding the Empire style. They can be traced in the various architectural programmes of places, public buildings, residences of the bourgeoisie and even in the architecture of villages.

Romanian architecture in the early half of the 19th century combines Romanticism and Neo-Classical elements. As far as the literature of the 1830s and 1840s is concerned, some of the most representative poets of the younger generation created both fables inspired by La Fontaine and meditations in the manner of Lamartine. It was the same with Neo-Classical edifices where decorative elements more especially were adopted from romantic architecture: towers and battlements, pointed arches and arcades, tall roofs and spires on the towers, often borrowed — indiscriminately — from Gothic buildings, some even of moorish origin. In 1831—1832, architects Vitul and Konrad Schwinck added polygonal towers on the corners and a Neo-Gothic cornice at the Șuțu palace (today the Bucharest History Museum) though the palace is Neo-Classical. In 1840—1852 the same Neo-Gothic spirit prevailed in the reconstruction of various churches in Wallachia — Bistrița, Dealu, Tismana, Cozia, Arnota, Antim — by architect Ioan Schatter.

However, romanticism asserted itself to the full in the second half of the century, due to the prestige enjoyed by the ideology and literary crea-

tions of the generation who had upheld these ideas during the revolution of 1848.

Romanian painting during the first half of the 19th century, developed in a similar way. The only difference was that the tradition of the previous century lasted for a long time, a complex tradition despite the apparent naive interpretation of portraits. The art historian Andrei Cornea, who in his thorough exegesis of the "primitives" of modern Romanian painting has demonstrated that this category of artists should not be confused with the "primitives" in western painting, holds that there are a few specific traits typical of the Romanian "primitives". He notices for instance the different treatment of the parts of one single painting, "an apparent eclecticism, never frequent in the western art of the time, particularly in the Neo-Classical one whose influence is supposed to have been predominant with Romanian artists." He means to say that the face is treated in a manner recalling the icon painters of old, resulting in a marked ascetic character of the features, whereas the objects — clothes, furniture, draperies — seem to be surprisingly vivid as if they were human beings.

This is not due to the clumsines of the painters, for the historian is pleasantly surprised by the skilful modelling and sublte tones which are not merely decorative — as they are with the artists known in general as *primitives* in the sense western art historians usually use the term. The conclusion the Romanian art historians have recently come to is that this is a transitional phenomenon not a regression, as it was formerly believed to be, when the art of the portrait painters active at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century was compared with the gorgeous murals of the Romanian Middle Ages and Renaissance.

It is quite obvious that the large number of portraits reflects a significant change in the taste of the public; it is also the taste of the public — a new aristocracy and bourgeoisie, in general far from conversant with art — which contributed to a large extent to the modification of the western models even when the painters who worked here were quite familiar with them. In this light, painting at the time did not meet the definition of *primitivism*; it proved to be *pseudo-primitive*, a manner of painting suiting the taste of those who commissioned the painter, a deliberate artistic tendency; such an art expressed therefore a particular kind of mannerism. Thus, early Romanian lay painting should be considered to be more than merely documentary and to reflect a peculiar vision.

Already in the 18th century, in 1787 the painters in Wallachia had set up their own guild. One of its earliest representatives was *Grigore Zugravu* the author of a composition in which the scene representing Prince Nicolae Mavrogheni (1786—1790) mounting the throne of Wallachia is encomiastically shown. A little later, about 1820, Romanian painting was illustrated by *Nicolae Polcovnicul*, *Ion Balomir*, *Nicolae Teodorescu*, *Mihai Velceleanu*, *Eustație Altini*, almost all of them portrait painters; their technique echoes western painting to various degrees; as a matter of fact, an entire section of Romanian painting seldom took over the models coming from the West, continuing in the manner of the votive portraits of old. Except for Altini perhaps, most of the painters active in the first twenty or thirty years of the century created hieratic, bidimensional works, in which volume is not suggested by the modelling of colour, works which were characterized by a graphic style of drawing. We know, for instance, of one of those artists, *Nicolae Polcovnicul* (1788—1842) who lived at the turn of the century, that

he executed murals and that he was one of the painters who had repainted the metropolitan church in Bucharest; his *Self-portrait* on show at the National Gallery throws light on the attitude of a painter of religious murals who was aware of the fact that lay easel painting must solve different problems. He tried to solve them in an obvious effort to do away with the typically Byzantine bidimensional interpretation, and to model volumes by means of gradations of light and shade in a post-Renaissance spirit. His contemporary, *Ion Balomir* (1794—1835) who came from Transylvania to work in Iași decorated one of the important palaces in the capital of Moldavia; his portraits evince the same endeavours to achieve a synthesis between the traditional hieratism of the line and its ability to suggest volume.

We know more about the life of *Eustație Altini* (1772—1815) thanks to the researches carried on by art historian Remus Niculescu. We know for instance, that he was granted a scholarship by the principality of Moldavia and went to Vienna to study painting at the Academy, which goes to explain his inclination towards Neo-Classicism, the tendency to adapt the perspective and the chiaroscuro to the canons of traditional iconography, in other words, to bring Greek Orthodox religious painting nearer to European academism. Altini was the founder of a tradition in this respect and some of his followers were important artists of the second half of the 19th century. His portraits evince a perfectly well assimilated technique and a refined sensitiveness; although he was able to suggest the psychological portrait of his models and to create images of subtle chromatics, Altini never lost the delight of the miniaturist, which Vasile Florea, an exegete of his work, detects in every detail such as the lace adorning the clothes of his models — women belonging to the upper classes — or the diadems they wear.

Of the foreign artists who came to the Romanian Principalities, only few left any significant imprint on the history of Romanian art. Some of them however stayed longer and set up workshops where Romanian painters were trained and made a name for themselves in the art of the 19th century. Others never left and their teaching activity in the schools recently set up deserves the attention of art historians.

Such was *Giovanni Schiavoni* (1804—1848) whom Gheorghe Asachi, the founder of artistic higher education in the city of Iași, had invited to come and teach painting. He was not only an excellent pedagogue but also a painter of European renown. A native of Trieste, son of a Venetian painter, he stayed in Iași for a short time, but left a few portraits which show his command of composition, of the chiaroscuro and above all, his ability to grasp and express the psychology of his models in subtle nuances.

Niccolo Livaditti (1804—1860), a painter of Greek descent belonging to the same generation, came also from Trieste. He had been trained in Italy and was a former member of the Carbonari Movement. A portrait painter by vocation, he revitalized the group portrait which all those who commissioned him knew quite well from the mediaeval and Renaissance votive paintings. His compositions are more natural, the line alert, space is suggested more clearly (although his models' posture is rather rigid, and sometimes emphatic). The Austrian painter *Mihail Töpler* (1780—1820?) was also a gifted portraitist; he could render in every detail the material aspect of clothes. However, both with him and the Hungarian painter *Josef August Schoefft* (1778—1860) painting had become routine; their main object in most cases was to execute a flattering portrait of their sitters.

The Hungarian painter *Miklós Barabás* (1810—1898) was different. He spent only two years in Bucharest and was particularly attracted by scenes and types he painted in watercolours which lends his works a spontaneous character. Born in Transylvania, where he spent his childhood, he got to know and love the Romanian peasants as his work clearly shows.

Anton Chladek (1794—1882) was a Czech from the Serbian Banat. He came to Romania in 1835 when he settled for good. The same as with similar artists, both the technique and vision of his painting belong to the 1840 period. The moment represented a turning point in the development of Romanian painting, as those who studied the period stressed, a turning point whose significance is enhanced by the activity of scholars as well who founded new forms of higher education. Such were Gheorghe Asachi, at the "Mihăileană" Academy and *Carol Wallenstein* (a Croatian who changed his name signing Valstein after he came to Wallachia), at St. Sava College in Bucharest, together with artists of founders of schools like the one sponsored by the bishopric Buzău, founded in 1831, or the school in Bocșa Română in Banat headed by the young Mihai Vedeanu.

We learn from George Oprescu, the first historian of 19th century Romanian painting, that in 1537 Valștein published *Elements of Drawing and Architecture*, a booklet of practical advice to his pupils. Josef de Adler, about whom we know very little except that he lived in Iași during the same period, is mentioned by George Oprescu as the author of a treatise on landscape painting which served as a model for his pupils. Yet Valștein's plans were more ambitious: he executed several historical compositions whose central figure was Michael the Brave, the favourite hero of the Romanian romantic writers at a time when his victories over the Ottomans were considered an evidence of the Romanians' stubborn opposition to foreign invasions. As a matter of fact, about the same time, the Romanian poetry tackled the great themes of national history from a typically romantic angle, always showing it to be an edifying patriotic argument in a period of elan which was to culminate in the 1848 revolution which — in Wallachia and Transylvania more especially — was based on a coherent programme including social and national claims expressed by the representatives of all the sections of the Romanian people.

The names of *Ion Negulici* (1812—1850), *Barbu Iscovescu* (1816—1854) and *Constantin Daniel Rosenthal* (1820—1851) are always mentioned to illustrate the great civic ideals of the time. Their lives and artistic creations are fine examples of a total commitment to the revolution. *Ion Negulici* was brought up in the intelectual ambience of Ion Eliade Rădulescu, one of the most prominent personalities of the time, himself a leader of the revolutionary movement of 1848. The young man enjoyed a thorough education; he had translated and illustrated *Gulliver's Travels* by Swift as well as several French novels, popular at the time; he had also drawn up a list of works to be translated, a "project of a universal library" which points to his broad literary , scientific and philosophical horizon. He studied first in the country (under Livaditti) then in Paris (under representatives of academism); he returned to Bucharest where he became one of the most conspicuous representatives of the generation engaged in the fight for the prosperity of the country.

Early enough he gained recognition as a gifted portraitist; outstanding figures of social life in Romania, as well as higher officials in the countries where he travelled — France, Austria, Greece, Turkey — were his models.

The figures of revolutionaries are familiar to us thanks to the portraits painted by Negulici, simple and full of warmth, the very opposite of the ceremonial portraits. He was also one of the creators of landscape painting, a genre which, in course of time, was to become typical of Romanian painting. A *Landscape from Cîmpulung* with its transparency, the subtle rendering of atmosphere, and a warm harmonious colouring, marks a starting point in Romanian painting.

He was equally proficient in oils, water colours, lithographs and executed — besides portraits, landscapes and book illustrations — compositions with many personages as well as some of the earliest still lifes in Romanian painting. Surprisingly enough, in some of his paintings the academic technique combines with romantic themes; such is *The Madhouse*, a study of paroxistic moods executed in the romantic spirit of a similar painting by Géricault. (Unfortunately, Negulici's painting has not come down to us, and it is possible to reconstitute it only from descriptions by his contemporaries). When the revolution was suppressed he was exiled and died in a political prisoners camp in Brussa (Turkey).

Barbu Iscovescu met with an equally tragical fate. The son of a Bucharest icon painter, he was first his father's apprentice, then studied art in Vienna where he stayed for 12 years. Having already joined in revolutionary battles, he travelled the provinces of the Russian Empire no doubt on secret missions. He arrived in Bucharest when the revolution was about to break out and from the very beginning he collaborated with the new government; among other things he painted the revolutionary banner with its slogan "Justice and Brotherhood", an echo of the French Revolution. The same as Louis David during the 1789 Revolution, Negulici enthusiastically organized various public festivities during the period of great revolutionary upsurge.

Most of his work was lost during the years that followed his death in the camp of political exiles in Brussa. The few works still extant reveal a curious synthesis: the authentic character preserved by a painter who had started his career under the auspices of the traditional painting of icon makers and the vision of the former pupil of the Viennese academic painters. His picturesque landscapes evince a certain spontaneous notation far from frequent in those times. The various types he sketched during his travels in Austria and the Romanian cities are equally spontaneous. Portraits by his hand of revolutionary leaders from Wallachia and Transylvania have come down to us; they are painted in a simple traditional manner, evincing at the same the artist's concern for the rendering of the countenance characteristic of every model.

Of all the artists of the times, *Constantin Daniel Rosenthal* met with the most tragical fate. The son of a wealthy Jewish family from Budapest, he was repudiated by them because of his radical ideas. In 1842 he came to Bucharest after having studied at the Vienna Academy. He soon joined the revolutionaries in Wallachia and, soon after the provisional government was formed, in June 1848, he was admitted to the Romanian citizenship in recognition of his dedication to his adopted country. Banished after the suppression of the revolution he never lost touch with the radical circles in Paris, Budapest, Vienna and probably in Transylvania; he was arrested by the police in Budapest and killed while in jail.

It goes without saying that, considering the young age when he died — he was only thirty one — it is difficult to draw any definite conclusion regarding the overall merit of his work. However, the same as with Negulici and

Iscovescu, one can notice a new outlook on the portrait which is no longer a mere proof of the virtuosity of the painter, designed to please wealthy customers. Rosenthal executed only the portraits of people he felt attached to, of people whose convictions he shared; more, perhaps, than any of his contemporaries, he tackled the portrait from a romantic angle, the significance of each work being in fact a reflex of a spiritual affinity. He had spent some time in England, so that the technique and atmosphere of the 18th century English portrait he had adopted can be easily understood; in this way Rosenthal was to contribute to the modernization of a vision which had begun to appear in Romanian portrait painting.

However, his main contribution should be sought in the field of political and patriotic allegory. He executed two paintings with symbolic subjects during the fiery days of the revolution: *Romania Breaking Her Fetters on the Plain of Freedom* and *Revolutionary Romania*. The academic element is still obvious in the former, in which the attitude of the personage enveloped in the revolutionary flag, waving an olive branch and trampling under foot the old reactionary laws, belongs to classical allegory. The other picture, however, is animated by a romantic élan, the portrait is drawn in bold lines, the gesture is energetic, which justifies the opinion that this work plays the same role in Romanian painting as *Liberty Guiding the People* by Delacroix in that of the French,

Of the other artists who espoused the ideas of the revolution, special mention should be made of *Gheorghe Năstăseanu* (1812—1864) who was a student at the time in Rome, where he fought on the barricades and was wounded by the Pope's militia. He rejected the academic precepts and adopted a romantic manner of painting; his portraits painted with gusto and placed in an atmosphere of unrest are ample proof thereof.

Few are those, however, who, while adopting romantic themes implicitly renounced academist methods. As a matter of fact the symbiosis between academism and romanticism is one of the characteristic features of Romanian painting in the mid-19th century. *Constantin Lecca* (1807—1887), a Transylvanian, a highly regarded painter who had settled in Bucharest, created many historical paintings with formal, schematic elements belonging to academism. A cultivated man, carrying on an unflagging cultural activity in various domains (he did translations, printed books, edited them, founded magazines), Lecca did his utmost to consolidate a vision which was to prevail in Romanian painting for many years to come. *Mișu Popp* (1827—1892) who came from Transylvania the same as Lecca, decorated several churches with paintings, together with his older brother of the brush; yet, with him, the romantic themes combined — misleadingly enough sometimes — with classical ones influenced by the same academism which dominated his compositional methods, his light effects, chiaroscuro and foreshortening. Popp made also portraits of peasants for, together with many writers and artists in the second half of the 19th century, he belonged to a new trend which rediscovered fundamental qualities in the life of the Romanian village: he expressed this idea through his allegories and the scenes of peasant life he painted.

Mihail Lapaty (1816—1860?) holds a place apart in the history of 19th century art owing to his consistent romantic beliefs rather than to his works; his inborn romantic inclinations were strengthened by his studies in Paris under Ary Scheffer, one of the most prominent romantic painters. His con-

temporary *Gh. Panaiteanu Bardasare* (1816—1905) was trained in an academist milieu in Munich (where he lived for 20 years) which can be easily noticed in his correct but cold paintings. His great merit lies in the fact that he set up a modern fine arts school in Iași, which he headed for many years: its authority with artists and power to influence them lasted for a long time.

After the union of Wallachia with Moldavia in 1859 and especially after 1864 when a fine arts school was founded in Bucharest, similar to the one in Iași but with teachers better trained than their colleagues in the Moldavian city, Bucharest, the capital of the new state, became the centre of the Romanian artistic life. Of course, this did not preclude the appearance of important artistic personalities in other parts of the country. Panaiteanu was born in Moldavia, like Năstăseanu too (who worked for a long time in Rome where he died in utter poverty), or like *George Schiller* (1824—1880) a former student of the well-known Venezian painters Natale and Giovanni Schiavoni; yet, his vocation — as art historian Vasile Florea notes — was counteracted by the effect of the course in architecture which he attended later on. Various histories of Romanian painting mention *Constantin Daniel* (1798?—1873), an artist from Banat, who was trained in Timișoara and executed murals and portraits until about 1862. The few works by his hand which have come down to us attracted the attention of professor George Oprescu for "their vigour, fine colouring and perfect line evocative of life", and made him draw the conclusion that he was "a serious painter, a highly proficient one". *Nicolae Popescu* (1835—1877) a younger painter from Banat learned his trade from Mihail Velceleanu (trained in Munich) and then, in Oradea, from Mihail Popovici, another Romanian painter. He went on studying first in Budapest, then at the Art Academy in Vienna and lastly in Rome. We learn from his biographers that he wanted to illustrate *Awake Romanians!*, a highly popular patriotic song, and to publish an album with lithographs representing the bas-reliefs on Trajan's Column. We do not know to what extent he fulfilled all these plans, but the portraits still extant (especially the *Portrait of a Man in Red* on show at the National Gallery) attest his firm constructive line, his ample chromatics.

Epaminonda Bucevschi (1843—1891) is the most prominent among the painters coming from Bucovina. His murals in which he introduced a new iconography — establishing thus a connection with the traditional canons — and his portraits more especially, confirm his thorough academic training, although there are romantic echoes in some of his compositions (*Dante Goes into Exile* for instance) and even echoes of the 18th century French school of painting in others, featuring idylic scenes with personages clad in Rococo costumes.

Gheorghe Tattarescu (1820—1874) offers a telling example of the broad horizon the Romanian artists opened up to academism. Trained at the San Lucca Academy, he always cultivated the themes and stylistic vision of classicism and even in the portraits of his contemporaries he made (owing to which we have become familiar with the appearance of some outstanding personalities of the political and cultural life of the epoch, such as the portrait of the great revolutionary scholar Nicolae Bălcescu) the influence of his classical training is quite clear. The conception of his allegorical patriotic themes is also academic whereas the subject of his narratives inspired from national history recalls the Antiquity rather than the Middle Ages, the way the romantic painters did. That is why some of his landscapes depicting the Carpath-

ians — freed from any strict academist rule — are unexpectedly sincere and sternly frank.

A romantic inclination, allusive rather than explicit, characterizes the paintings by *Carol Popp Szathmary* (1812—1868), a Transylvanian who had come to Bucharest in 1840. Restless by nature, he travelled the country far and wide and recorded his impressions in vivid watercolours. Szathmary was able to grasp on the spot the correct tonality of a landscape or a scene, to define a type; he sought the picturesque element in the milling crowds at the fairs and in the town streets, in the costumes of the peasants he met during his travels and in the architecture of the old monuments. The programme was therefore romantic while the technique of the watercolour obliged him to give up the longlasting studies in the studio and to record the light effects as he saw them, in the open. He was one of the earliest photographers; the photos he made during the Crimean War (1853—1856) are some of the invaluable documents of the epoch.

Theodor Aman (1831—1891) was the most prominent personality of the time, an artist who in his most representative paintings went beyond the tenets of academism, heralding the innovations the younger generation of painters was to introduce. Even when he was faithful to academist formulas, he obviously tried to find more flexible, more natural means of expression, the more so as he consistently believed that the mission of art is to participate in debating the great problems of the present times; historical painting in his opinion was both the supreme evidence of the academic artist's skill in constructing a scene and the evocation in a romantic spirit of the glorious old times meant ot proclaim generous patriotic ideals, the union of the principalities and the realization of their independence. Sometimes his participation in the developments of the time is direct and he renounced the historical compositions with an allusive content; the paintings he executed around the year 1859 when the two Romanian Principalities were united, clearly attest the attitude of Aman, a convinced supporter of this act of great national importance.

It is a fact, however, that Aman's historical paintings, though more expressive and more dynamic than those of his contemporaries, do not fully express the innovating significances of his vision. His portraits and landscapes are executed with warmth and the desire to grasp the poetic significance of the moment, which reveals the real gifts of the painter. In certain landscapes, the sun blurs the contours and creates an atmosphere that seems to prove that Aman was familiar with the vision of *plein-air* painters ; in other landscapes the water shining under the bright sky suggests the same affinity.

Like many of his contemporaries, Aman was interested in the life of the peasants; he interpreted the Romanian village in the spirit of the time, making of it an idyllic image, picturesque, never dramatic. Here too the colouring is bright and harmonious. It is rather risky, of course, to attribute these qualities to some impressionist model; it has been suggested that one can perceive here the efforts of the artist to assimilate elements of a new language introduced by a younger generation. However, it is also true that when analysing one of the artist's compositions left unfinished, some exegetes were able to reveal similarities with the impressionist technique of superposing colours; but these aspects are seldom to be found in Aman's painting and they point to the atmosphere of an epoch in which the artistic vision underwent deep-going changes.

Aman systematically organized artistic education in Romania; for more than twenty-five years he was at the head of the Fine Arts Academy in Bucharest, and his principles underlying the organization of artistic education were valid for a long time. He was also one of the outstanding graphic artists of the time, equally proficient in *pointe sèche* and *aquatint*.

After 1821, the graphic techniques in Romania modernized rapidly. Traditional xylography gradually lost ground and was replaced by lithography which offered easier artistic possibilities of engraving and multiplication. Several foreign artists contributed to the development of this new technique; some of them reproduced drawings made by Romanian artists. It is worth mentioning that, owing to the great precision of their details, some of the drawings and lithographs executed by the foreign artists have been of great help in recent times, when many an old monument has been restored.

An important moment in the development of Romanian lithography is connected with the activity of a centre set up in Iași by Gh. Asachi who surrounded himself with many artists painters and lithographers whose markedly patriotic programme included portraits of the voïvodes of yore and scenes mirroring the Romanians' fight for independence. Asachi founded a Typolithographic Institute as well for the wide diffusion of images designed to strengthen the militant spirit of those who demanded the complete independence of the country. The lithographs produced at the Institute were published in the magazine "*Albina Românească*" edited by Asachi. In Transylvania, Zaharia Carcalechi edited and published several illustrated calendars — for the population of villages and market towns — with the contribution of Constantin Lecca and other artists who took up engraving only sporadically. It is significant, however, that the artists animated by the ideals of the 1848 revolution (Negulici, Lapaty, and others, less important, like *Ioan Costande* whose work is almost entirely lost) used lithography for its propagandistic virtues more especially.

In the second half of the century, etching — a metal technique — was adopted by prominent artists who made of it an art able to vie with any other in every respect. Engravings executed in steel were to be found as early as 1845—1846 in Asachi's magazines; however, it was Theodor Aman who made of his engravings genuine works of art at the time. It is true that for a time he borrowed his subjects from his paintings, without changing them in any way; but the moment he introduced in his engravings scenes from the life of the peasants, the artist brought in a graver note, deeper than in his oils devoted to the same subject.

Sculpture in the 19th century is an almost entirely new chapter of art. In the previous centuries carving and modelling were mostly decorative, elements were added to architecture or to some independent creations — metal, ceramic or wooden objects — just to adorn them (illustrating thus their ornamental vocation *par excellence*). It was only in the early decades of the 19th century that sculpture broke with this tradition and came into the open, first as allegorical monuments and only in the second half of the century as figurative art.

The first to acquire the status of a genuine sculptor was *Karl Storck* (1826—1887), a German by origin, who came to Bucharest when he was very young, in 1849. He worked first as plasterer, jeweller and stone-cutter. After

having completed his studies in Paris and Munich, he came back to Romania, a well-trained artist now, and executed neo-classical monuments, portraits and basreliefs in the spirit of Canova and Thorwaldsen who were his models according to art historians. Towards the end of his life, one can detect a certain naturalistic and sentimentalist influence, in the manner of Carpeaux, the artist tackling particularly small, graceful genre scenes. He taught for a long time at the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, where he trained the first generation of sculptors in Romania.

His son *Carol* (1854—1926) was one of his first pupils; after having worked in his father's studio, he specialized in Florence under Augustus Rivalta and in Philadelphia under Thomas Eakins. When he returned to Romania (in 1880) he already had a good command of his trade, which allowed him to assert himself simultaneously in the portrait and the allegorical and monumental sculpture; in his understanding of technique (modelling, *taille-directe*) and of the material (bronze, stone) he clearly surpassed his father.

Paul Focşeneanu (1840—1867), another pupil of Karl Storck, died too young to reach any eminence as a sculptor. He collaborated with his master executing the pediment of the old building of the Bucharest University. A bust of Michael the Brave, the only work left from him, suggests however the sensitive portraitist he could have become.

Karl Storck's most gifted pupils were *Ion Georgescu* (1856—1898) and *Ştefan Ionescu Valbudea* (1856—1918). Although Ion Georgescu died at an early age, he left a significant work attesting an indubitable talent, a thorough knowledge of construction and a sensitivity which enabled him to render unaltered the fresh plastic forms, even when he dealt with the themes of the classical Greek, Roman and Renaissance art he knew so well.

His personality appears even more clearly in his realistic works in which, the same as in his master's mature work, one can detect echoes of Carpeaux's artistic vision. Besides busts of Romanian men of culture, Georgescu executed several allegorical statues adorning the façade of the State Bank in Bucharest and the University of Iaşi.

His colleague Valbudea was a romantic temperament *par excellence*. After graduating the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, he studied in Paris with Frémiet, a prestigious sculptor of monumental sculpture at the time, the nephew and pupil fo Rude. The same as Ion Georgescu, Valbudea was attracted by the anatomy of the body, which he interpreted in the spirit of Michelangelo's *Slaves*. Vehement movements, a propensity for paroxistic moods, point to an obviously romantic temperament, securing him a place apart in the Romanian sculpture of the period. Unfortunately, the artist could not fully demonstrate his gift for monumental sculpture in the few allegorical works he executed: want of commissions put a stop to a career which could have been one of the most significant in the history of Romanian sculpture.

As a matter of fact, there were few monuments in the 19th century executed by autochtonous artists: the Romanian institutions, the aristocracy and the upper layers of the bourgeoisie preffered to resort to artists coming from foreign countries, even for ornamental sculptures of funerary monuments. Some of them, like *Vladimir Hegel* (1839—1918), of Polish origin, settled down in Romania and adorned the towns with monuments. Hegel's works show a robust talent, a firm command of construction, a sense of the natural and sensibility in the modelling of figures. He was also a gifted, pro-

ficient teacher, although Brâncuși, his best pupil at the School of Fine Arts, in Bucharest did not like his academist methods.

Meanwhile, the old School of Fine Arts in Iași could not boast any outstanding professor or pupil. The only pupil worth mentioning is *Dimitrie Tronescu* (1843—1906) who was trained in Rome by Ettore Ferrari an artist with a romantic monumental vision. Tronescu carved only one work in Carrara marble; all the others (most of them portraits) were cast in plaster, not in bronze, for the artist never had the means to cast them in this durable material. Thus Romanian art lost one more sculptor, for most of his works were destroyed.

Only a few years later, at the beginning of the 20th century, two sculptors of great renown, *Dimitrie Paciurea* and *Constantin Brâncuși* made a name for themselves almost concomitantly. They were both able to endow modern Romanian art with a sensitivity and depth comparable with the art in the great European centres. Nevertheless, sculpture at the end of the 19th century seldom rises above mediocrity, while genuine artists such as Georgescu and Valbudea left the world of art much too soon to achieve the potential promised by their beginnings.

A marked decline is obvious in the field of decorative arts as well, which in the previous centuries had evinced a specific original vision. Decorative objects, embroideries, objects made of precious metals or wood, had become — with few exceptions — handicraft objects; on the other hand, the ambition of the customers to display their opulence led to an overburdened ornamentation, to bold eclectic combinations devoid of any balance.

For a time, traditional orientasl tylistic elements in furniture and vestimentation together with others oomıng from the West coexisted. It is a fact that this coexistence was typic al o Romanian decorative arts; yet, this time no synthesis was achieved, butia parallel development in the form of a confrontation — not devoid of fpoltical significance — between conservative and new forms, although more often than not this imported *novelty* had no artistic support; it was just *fash on*. Baroque, Neo-Classical and Neo-Gothic styles combined in a baffling way, sometimes in one and the same piece of furniture. The purveyors of furniture, of clothes and jewellery came first from the central and western parts of Europe. However, on the early decades of the century there appeared some specialized local workshops and, frequently enough, the older workshops adapted their production to the taste of the new customers.

Foreign handicraftsmen had long started working in the Romanian towns often participating in achieving stylistic syntheses by adapting local elements to their own specific forms.

At the end of the century, in 1895, a yearbook of the artisans in Bucharest published lists of various trades (lengthy when compared to the size of the town). Italian stonecutters and sculptors, German and Italian armourers, German and Greek jewellers, artisans coming from Western countries who made tapestries, stained glass windows, art glassware, saddles, furniture, clothes are included in the lists together with a lot of Romanian artisans. This was, however, a moment when, under the impact of the *Jugendstil* or "Art 1900", a revival of such trades was taking place after a long period of decline, during which the new class of well-to-do people, the bourgeoisie, had believed that economic power meant importing objects from the great art centres of the West, particularly from Paris. This has seriously endangered the development of autochtonous decorative arts, whose old traditional refinement was ignored by the new customers.

The Founders of Modern Art

In 1870 the third "Exhibition of Living Artists" opened in Bucharest. The very existence of such a periodical manifestation was a telling proof of the change occuring in the public mentality and especially of the growing importance of art in Romania's social life. But the most important thing was the participation of an artist who was just turning thirty-two and of whom some people knew that he had studied in France from 1861 to 1869 (the Bucharest newspapers had announced his return home in flattering commentaries) and that Napoleon III had bought *Vase with Flowers*, one of his paintings on show at the exhibition of the Barbizon painters in 1868.

Twenty-six of his paintings were on view at the exhibition held in 1870 and the jury had awarded him the gold medal. Theodor Aman, the most prominent artistic personality of the time, made the following commentary on his younger colleague: "Mr. Grigorescu, a disciple of the French school (or rather of himself, we should say) has joined with great success this time the artists who have already had their works on show in the past few exhibitions; we have before us, here, a new genre, which in time will bear fruit for the Romanian school of painting." Aman was right: the 20th century art historians will usually divide the evolution of modern Romanian painting into two great periods: before and after *Nicolae Grigorescu.*

He was born in 1838, in a village in Dîmbovița county, the sixth son of a poor peasant. His father died in 1843 and his mother and her children moved to Bucharest. At the age of ten, Grigorescu was apprenticed to a painter whom George Oprescu identified in the person of Chladek. We do not know for sure how long he worked under Chladek; in any case, in 1812 when he was barely twelve, he was painting small icons he sold in order to support his family. Soon after, in 1855, he painted several big icons for the church in Băicoi (Prahova county) and one year later, other icons for Căldărușani Monastery. From 1856 to 1860 he executed the murals of Zamfira Monastery (Prahova county) and Agapia, in Moldavia. However, for the time being there were no obvious signs of any renewal of his traditional manner of painting.

In 1861, he was granted a scholarship which enabled him to go to France where he studied under two of the most famous academic painters Sebastien Cornu and Charles Gleyre (the latter, a Swiss, had settled down in Paris; he trained, among others, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Bazille and Whistler). It is rather difficult to know whether the atmosphere in Gleyre's studio made those young painters, Grigorescu included, leave the studio and go to work in the midst of nature, trying to understand the effect of light on the aspect of things, on the air enveloping them and on the colours sifting through verdure or reflected by the water. He spent the summer of 1862 in the forest of Fontainebleau, at Barbizon, where a school of painting had been set up a few years before, whose antiacademist attitude is one of the most significant trends of art history in the 19th century. At the same time, the young Romanian painter made copies in the Louvre and the Luxembourg museum after paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Salvator Rosa, Prud'hon and Géricault, which show his uninterrupted effort to rediscover the expressive quality of light, thus rigorously opposing the classical tenets. It is not only under the influence of those masters that Grigorescu's artistic creation passed through a romantic period which can be easily detected in some paintings

with subjects inspired from national history; the Romanian atmosphere had long been dominated by this proclivity for historical themes and, a few years before, when he had applied for a scholarship for France, young Grigorescu himself had sent his petition together with a composition inspired from Michael the Brave's fights.

Grigorescu's rapid evolution towards the new pictorial formula his Barbizon experiences taught him is remarkable indeed and it can be traced in all the genres he tackled. Remus Niculescu, an exegete who was able to unravel the essential meanings of Grigorescu's art, has come to the following conclusion regarding the artist's French experiences: "He has created an absolutely personal language he masters with elegance and ease, free from reminiscences and yet comprising a rich experience in which the Baroque, the romantics and the landscape painters of his time stand side by side."

Within a few years his portraits pass from the academist model to the romantic chiaroscuro and then to the vigorous images in which the line no longer encircles the form, the latter being suggested by a few patches of colour; this is one of the most characteristic traits of his artistic creation. Peasants or young girls their faces lighted by a smile or hardly clouded by nostalgia make up a comprehensive gallery of portraits, indubitably the amplest in the whole of Romanian painting. Grigorescu captured different moods in his portraits.

At a time when an antiacademist style was adopted, the historical composition was the touchstone of any painter. What protected Grigorescu from any academist influence was his participation as a volunteer in the War of Independence (1877—1878). Together with other painters (Szathmary among them), Grigorescu went to the front, drawing battle scenes, moments of respite between engagements, convoys of Turkish prisoners, portraits of the Romanian soldiers and of the enemy made prisoner. They are the quick notations of a reporter, but also the starting point of further vast compositions, the most impressive no doubt in the branch of Romanian painting that draws its inspiration from dramatic battle scenes. Devoid of any bombast, these genuine epic scenes are testimonies of a simple, unaffected heroism. The artist knew the heroes of those episodes quite well; they were peasants coming from the Romanian villages, but wearing military uniforms, and he was able to portray them with keen insight.

Nevertheless, Grigorescu's most substantial contribution to the creation of a modern vision in Romanian painting is to be found in his landscapes; the painter revealed the poetic significance of a landscape, he created an atmosphere, not a mere image whose main virtue is to be faithful to reality. His vision benefited equally by the example of the Barbizon school and by that of the impressionists, yet it was not identical to theirs.

All along a unitary evolution, he simplified the motif, gradually reducing it to its essence, concomitantly and gradually changing his technique in point of style, composition and chromatics. The landscapes of northern France, belonging to his beginnings, are painted with a dense paste laid with short strikes of the brush or with the knife; for the Romanian landscape in the hilly regions where Grigorescu was to work most of his life, he used a technique combining — as Vasile Florea notes — strong brush strokes with longer brushings, finer tone values and certain luminous transparencies. One cannot distinguish here only the beginning of a change of technique for the very character of the landscape is different and Grigorescu demonstrates that he

can be equally convincing in the dramatic atmosphere of Normandie and in the landscapes of his country where light is calmer, stumping the colours as it were, while in the French landscapes the tones are more intense, browns and blues being prevalent. In the Romanian landscapes, the colour range is based especially on the luminous green of the vegetation and on the light blue of the summer sky, over which greys and whites spread like a transparent vapour. Towards the end of his artistic career, during the so-called "white period", this technique was to become more and more obvious, which made some of Grigorescu's exegetes hold that his painting had become mannerist in his old years.

A lasting feature of Grigorescu's landscape is its interpretation as the background of man's life; because his subjects are almost always peasants, he is characterized as the painter of the peasantry. It is true that it was not he who introduced the peasant theme into Romanian painting, but the romantic painters. However, before him, with few exceptions, the peasant had been considered a picturesque element, whereas Grigorescu knew them well, he was one of them, he clearly understood their psychology and identified himself with them to a certain point.

From the very beginning the main traits of Grigorescu's art were clearly defined: chromatic concision, a natural and simple posture of the personages, the lack of any etnographic picturesqueness of the costumes, all this rendered by means of a brush work full of zest, a paste laid in powerful energetic brush strokes, a calm dynamism of the forms.

As early as 1938, Alexandru Busuioceanu, with his keen insight into the painter's work, remarked that the discussions regarding Grigorescu's paintings dwelt too long on his subjects and seldom penetrated its very substance. We must also note that the success Grigorescu's œuvre enjoyed is due in the first place to the frankness with which he assimilated modern art during his formative years. His vision illustrates what Alois Riegel for instance termed "a remote vision" (Fernsicht): the space circulating around the subject proper is wide indeed; it comprises the people in his paintings, the flocks of sheep, the oxcarts advancing from beyond the horizon through the powdery sun. And we can say, the same as Ion Frunzetti, a fine conoisseur of modern art in Romania, that Grigorescu's painting is an art of syntheses, treating non-homogeneous surfaces in broad patches, unified by distance: "it is an impressionism in fact, which the Romanian artist discovers step by step, without ever incorporating the concomitant experiences of the impressionists in the West."

Undeniably, it was said, *colour* does not prevail in the nature he painted, for in the glaring sun it turns almost white; it is light that prevails. As an impressionist painter with Grigorescu, everything, even *colour*, becomes *light*.

Ioan Andreescu (1850—1882), the most prominent of Grigorescu's contemporaries, met with a much more pitiless fate. "A great tragical figure of Romanian painting", he died an untimely death, at the age of 32, when an artist has hardly reached maturity as a rule. There is obviously nothing spectacular in his biography (studied in every detail by Radu Bogdan, his exegete) which explains to a certain extent the development of Andreescu's painting in an epoch when — as is known — the various trends of culture gave rise to violent controversies. After graduating the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest he was appointed drawing master at the Ecclesiastical Seminary in Buzău, a small town in the north-east of Wallachia where he led an unevent-

ful life. A year later, he began to teach drawing at the gymnasium and then at the vocational school in the same town.

Only a few years before he died he was granted a scholarship enabling him to continue his studies in Paris. The same as Grigorescu he preferred *plain-air* painting to working in a studio (he had joined the famous *Academie Julian*). His work marks the maturity of a trend which had originated in Grigorescu's painting. There are few instances in the 1870 even in European art as a whole able to reveal such a tense poetic feeling, such grave meditation and deep understanding of the material quality of the visible world. Jacques Lassaigne, a distinguished art historian, credited him with "the definitive orientation of Romanian art."

The ample monograph written by Radu Bogdan (of which two volumes have been published so far) has brought to light the meanings of Andreescu's entire work; it is a modest work in its dimensions — about 240 paintings — but it could not have been otherwise for the artist died ten years only after graduating the School of Fine Arts. Although his first works deserve every attention, they seldom foreshadow the fine achievements of his mature creations. They are still lifes, humble pots with field and garden flowers or portraits of peasants, quite different from those of Grigorescu, figures of pale, thoughtful peasant women clad in sober, unadorned costumes.

His real vocation, however, was the landscape. The same as many painters of his generation, he took Grigorescu as model discovering his work in 1873 in the ample exhibition where his older confrère had 150 paintings on display. It was the moment when he decisively adopted *plein-air* painting which he was to interpret consistently in the spirit of his austere character. Buzău and its surroundings offered him desolate images, in which light is diffuse, and the shadow cast by trees and houses seem to be melting into the dark ground.

The earth is the central element of nature in Andreescu's paintings. Under his tall skies earth is muddy, the grass stunted. The motifs he painted are in the first place "the village outskirts", isolated, lonely houses with scarcely any tree around them, village wells with their sad poles piercing the sky arrowlike. Nature is unfriendly: dust in the droughty summer, mud and rain in autumn, snowdrifts in winter. The more surprising therefore the rare outbursts of light in the flowery meadows, although their delicate petals seem to be fluttering under a dark, greyish sky, the sunless sky in the twilight. The town outskirts have the same melancholy aspect, while the fairs with their motley milling crowds are far removed from the colourful gaiety in Szathmary's similar scenes for instance. Only the woods are painted in their full grandeur as though the whole light sprang from them, from the sturdy trunks full of sap. Late, in autumn, deprived of its leaves, it is dramatic, part of a tragical order of nature, the wood Andreescu painted is as monumental as the classical buildings.

A sober palette of greens, greys and browns over which floats the pale blue sky, all of them laid with firm brush strokes to form a thick paste, envelop this prosaic reality in a wave of grave poesy. The vast stretches of land surrounded by low horizons look like images of a remote world; though real and material they seem to be fantastic projections of a spiritual universe. Rejecting any mimetic naturalism, Andreescu filled the simple, common scenes with poesy. His means of expression are never ostentatious, the composition

is always calm devoid of any unexpected arythmia; it is only an intense emotion, a concentration full of contained pathos, a severe elimination of superfluous images that conveys the profound significances of his painting.

When in 1879 at the age of 29 he went to France, he was already a mature artist. He knew exactly what to concentrate on — i.e. the rendering of the human body — in order to achieve a coherent expression. Hence his numerous studies of the nude, of portraits, of personages wearing period costumes. The manner in which he solves problems of expression, of the organizations of planes, of tone values surpasses the exigencies of studio studies. However, Andreescu's sojourn in France did not change his vision in any way: his landscapes — the main expression of his vision — are still consistent with his previous work. However, certain rather important changes occurred in his technique: a free and easy execution, a lighter palette, a more vivid brushwork. The influence of French painting was "cathalytical", stimulating his originality. Andreescu anticipated the art of the post-impressionists by his effort to synthesize the image. At the same time he extended his thematic sphere by tackling subjects from agricultural work, subjects Millet was so fond of and which he created — as already noted — about the same time as Van Gogh. In the paintings executed in France the composition is more rigorous, the colour scheme more refined, expressed by a wide range of greys.

It was stated that in point of feeling too the landscapes made in France do not continue to any large extent those he had executed in Romania. His attitude to nature is as serious as it used to be, yet it no longer expresses the same sadness; his landescapes are rather calm than desolate, melancholy has been replaced by serene contemplation and spiritual balance. His meditations in front of nature are transcribed into compositions pervaded by a feeling of plenitude and grandeur as may be seen in *Road Among Hills* with its ample scenery, *Beechwood* with its symphonic force, or *Winter at Barbizon* about which Jacques Lassaigne wrote that "it seems to anticipate Utrillo at his best."

In an epoch dominated by the work of Grigorescu, few were those who noticed the poetic and philosophical significance of his younger contemporary, particularly as, living in Buzău, far from the turmoil of artistic life, the critics ignored him almost completely. Surprisingly enough, even the exhibition opened on his return from France, which clearly demonstrated the originality of his artistic conception, did not stir a wide echo. It is the merit of the 20th century critics — Alexandru Busuioceanu, Ion Frunzetti, Radu Bogdan, Andrei Pleșu, Vasile Varga, Eleonora Costescu — to have reappraised his work and restored it to its real dimensions.

The history of art in recent years has rejected the naïve sentimentalist and sociologist interpretations, laying stress instead on content and formvalues. Notions such as sadness, gravity, pessimism, tragicalness, melancholy, which critics in the past often mentioned in connection with Andreescu's work, have acquired new meanings and specifications. Starting, for instance, from the concise character of his painting, from the synthesis far-near, optical-tactile, Radu Bogdan has defined the real nature of the melancholy in the painter's landscapes: it is "the simultaneous perception of the eternity and transience of things, of their inviolable massivity combined with an extreme fragility, of their distance and at the same time of their nearness to our mind."

It had become obvious that, with Aman, academism had offered everything positive in it and that the new stylistic orientation could no longer stem from the forms he had created. Although many of his pupils were faithful

to his academist manner of thinking, they adopted certain stylistic acquisitions of *plein-air* painting. This is valid both for those who studied in Paris and for those who went to Munich.

Ştefan Luchian (1868—1916) carried further the vision of the two great artists in the second half of the 19th century, lending it a modern significance and broadening its horizon. He appeared as a painter in an atmosphere of dynamic confrontation between the various aesthetic trends. He expressed, on the artistic plane, a dramatic understanding of reality, of the deeper causes determining it. Thanks to his work, Grigorescu's painting was able to fertilize modern Romanian art which rediscovered its real values, thrown into the shade or distorted by his epigones. As he did not agree with the academist art promoted by the Bucharest and Munich schools of painting, the young painter went to Paris — the centre of the innovating movements at the time — to seek an answer to the functions of art, to its relationships with the contemporary world. However, the Neo-Classical mentality of Bouguereau, his professor at the Julian Academy, could not appeal to him. It was the time when the painting based on the virtues of colour was gaining ground. The first exhibition of "The Independent Artists" in Paris, brought together Toulouse-Lautrec, Seurat and Signac, among others; Van Gogh's retrospective exhibition had revealed a world haunted by deep unrest, bathed in vibrant light, thirty years after it was branded by the philistine indignation of the pettybourgeois. Manet's *Olympia* entered the Luxembourg Museum.

On his return to Bucharest, Luchian brought with him, in his painting, the memory of the Parisian atmosphere so responsive to modern art. However, both the themes and details of his technique during this period prove that Grigorescu played an important role in the shaping of the young artist's personality. Thus Grigorescu's pastoral painting entered Romanian modern art, bearing fruit in a work whose dominant trait was its very tragical character. At other times however, Luchian assimilated impressionism directly, his work showing the influence of Degas. Thus, if the old master had facilitated his contact with the French *plein-air* painting, the younger generation, i.e. Luchian's generation, discovered without any other's help the sources of colourism. Yet Luchian's painting was to discover especially the dramatic world of the village and of the Bucharest suburbs.

The drama of the people living in them, humble as it was, expresses in fact the same feeling we can detect in the famous self-portrait of 1906, symbolically and humbly entitled *A Painter*. The face of a man still young, only thirty-eight, bears the mark of suffering: a cruel paralysis — which was to carry him off in the end — made him suffer agonizing pain. Luchian was to die immobilized in an armchair; yet, with the brush tied to his paralysed hand, he went on painting to the end.

Luchian was one of a long, tragical list of painters who fell victims to infirmity, yet they went on working with a superb determination to conquer their malady. Such were Degas and Renoir, both almost blind, Renoir crippled by arthritis. Luchian was not yet forty when the first signs of his infirmity appeared. The artist suffered martyrdom stoically, the same as Eminescu, Romania's greatest national poet who passed away at the early age of 39, after a dreadful confrontation with his illness.

The painter never felt tempted to add some beautiful accents to his landscapes just for the sake of beauty. Even when decorative, his painting is natural. Luchian discovers beauty in the humble aspects of an intimate universe, in the life of the common people, in the landscape he was familiar with. It is a simple, dramatic beauty which the commentary of the artist — and not the object itself — reveal. The portrait of a florist, for instance, a figure drawn in supple lines, radiates a calm joy of life, suggested by the colouring dominated by green and warm brown tints. The theme reminds one of some portraits by Daumier, of Degas' laundresses and — from a remoter period — of the jovial women in Hogarth's paintings; Luchian, however, endows the portrait of the florist with a sad poesy which has nothing in common with the spiritual robustness of the personages in the English painting or with the crushing sadness of those in the work of Daumier.

A landscape representing a few willow trees combines, in the soft light sifting through the leaves, Monet's impressionism with the chromatic construction of Grigorescu's landscapes. The powerful architecture of the green lines absorbs the bluish light of the sky, toning down the vibration of the air and emphasizing the strict succession of the planes. The construction of volumes demonstrates that Luchian took over from the impressionist technique only the elements necessary to integrate the forms into a unitary chromatism; contours are bathed in light, yet they are not pulverized, they do not lose their solidity.

The artist added townscapes to this landscapes endowing them with an austere poesy. A sober chromatics in which the dull tints are heightened by a pale pink or by a bright green, like in the *Winters* painted later on by Vlaminck; the stirring branches of some dark bushes, the planes of intersecting walls disturb at times the apparent calm of the landscape heightening the feeling of loneliness. The colour scheme is always spare even when suny green hues cascade down the walls.

Scenes from the life of the suburbs reveal their sad poetic concentration. It is meet and proper to note that Luchian rejects both the picturesqueness and exoticism painters — such as the German expressionist Otto Mueller — later felt inclined to discover in the life of gypsies in Romania as well as the somewhat romantic gracefulness of the flower girls painted by Edouard Goerg, a pretext for him to use a glittering range of colours. Luchian's personages resignedly accept their drama. The surprising transition from warm to cold colours, the limpid colouring, the rhythm of tones (demonstrating his modern conception of the role ochre tints play in setting off surfaces and volumes by means of colour) eliminates any exacerbation of the tragical, lending the entire composition an elegiac rather than tragical significance. *Hairwashing* is definitely a new landmark in the development of Romanian painting; some of the most representative painters of the next period will start from the luminous flesh tint, from the ornamental motif integrated with a fine sense of the decorative into this calligraphy of broad curves.

Luchian was mostly the painter of flowers; he was sometimes compared with the symbolist poets who, the same as Samain, sing the perfume and diaphanous colour of flowers; but his painting added an intense tragical note to the delicacy and grace of the symbolist poet. This shows that he was a lover of nature which he could discover only in a few patches of colour, in the flowers bathed in the dim light of his room, in front of the armchair of an invalid. He painted flowers in an attempt to go back to the age-old

art of the Romanian peasant; for, quite often, the earthen pots in which he put his flowers, as well as the entire chromatics of his paintings, resound as it were with green and brown hues he obviously took over from the folk enamelled ceramics: the explosion of white, red, violet or russet-yellow flowers acquires a grave musicality against the colour of baked clay suffusing the entire painting.

Sometimes, like in *The Blue Bottles* at the Cluj Museum, colours merge into a unique chromatic vibration which seems to lend the petals an ineffable brilliance. In the *Chrysantemums in a Blue Vase* (housed by the same museum), the contours change the whole image into a constellation of white, red, pink and green, recalling we could say, the famous lines by Mallarmé: "L'hyacinte, le myrte à l'odorable éclair / Et pareille à la chair de la femme, la rose / Cruelle Hérodiade en fleur du jardin clair, / Celle qu'un sang farouche et radieux arrose!". In the paintings with *Anemones* (one on view at the National Gallery, the other — more powerfully tragical maybe — at the Braşov Museum, with its glaring red projected against a densely coloured background) Luchian has grasped the tactile aspect of translucent petals creating light by spontaneous combinations of clear, intense colours.

Responsive to the renewals of European art, Luchian integrated them into a system of images springing in fact from his meditation in front of the visible world. His hectic life, his dedication to art, the sober quality and lyricism of his painting set him up as an example for the generations of artists that followed , an example of consciousness and creative sensibility. His utterly humanistic ideals found their expression in a vibrant pictorial poesy based on a principle he was faithful to all through the life of martyrdom, of an illuminated spirit. "We, artists look with our eyes, but work with our souls..."

During the first decades of the 20th century, Romanian sculpture was able to assert itself to the full. Outstanding personalities, such as Georgescu or Valbudea, had failed to endow national art with a clear, precise identity; with them the art of volumes had gone through the stage of searching for a figurative expressiveness, but they had not been able to build their own system of images. Two of the personalities that dominated Romanian sculpture in this period were *Dimitrie Paciurea* and *Constantin Brâncuşi*. Unfortunately Paciurea did not enjoy international recognition. And yet, as his main exegete Ion Frunzetti has demonstrated, Paciurea is "typologically opposed to Brâncuşi" and "offers, in contrast with the latter's creation but at the same time level with it, a document of Romanian sensibility and thinking exemplary for the rest of the modern world."

The same as Brâncuşi, whose senior he was by three years only, *Dimitrie Paciurea* (1873—1932) began his activity with works of a traditional vision which do not bear any stamp of the academist trends dominating the studios of Bucharest and Paris where the young artist was trained. He made his debut when he was twenty at the "Exhibition of Living Artists." Art historian Constantin Prut remarked that when Paciurea completed his studies in Paris at the end of the 19th century the artistic atmosphere was not clear enough" to enable the young sculptor to show his attitude — even if polemic — to the trends of the epoch." We can note, however, his response to certain echoes coming from the symbolist composition or to the delicate, sensitive modelling of impressionist sculpture, to "the decorative play of curves and countercurves" characteristic of "Art Nouveau"; yet, it is quite clear that

this is a sort of contamination, "a modality of throwing light — in a favourable context — on his own spititual and emotional make-up."

Paciurea endeavoured to lend universal modern art a sense peculiar to autochtonous tradition, to bring them together, to combine them. In 1912 for instance, he made a funeral statue for a chapel in Bellu Churchyard in Bucharest. The theme — *Assumption* — belongs to the traditional iconography. Yet the style is typical of Art Nouveau, as Paul Constantin — the author of a study on the manifestations of this trend in Romania — suggests. Nevertheless, Paciurea achieved a synthesis integrating the simplifications peculiar to Byzantine art — an elongated line resulting in the dematerialization of the body —, while the face, serenely motionless, preserves its delicate feminity. This is — beyond any answer to the essential questions of the style — the definition of an attitude to the opposition life-death and, of course to the unity — beyond life and death — of spirit and matter. There are few examples able to substantiate Paciurea's belief that the Byzantine forms contain plenty of elements favourable to a modern construction.

A few years earlier, in 1906, the young artist had carved a statue — the only official commission he had ever received — which reveals another important facet of his personality. With his athletic musculature, the personage was placed in a composition which illustrates a well-known folk tale: two brothers, two giants, were in love with the same girl and the hatred they nourished for one another transformed them into stone. The second giant was carved by Frederic Storck and the young girl lying asleep at their feet was made by Filip Marin. The giant executed by Paciurea recalls the ample movements of Michelangelo's personages, the spiral attitude of the body conveys a force reminding one of the monuments created during the Hellenistic period or the Baroque.

In Paciurea's entire work, the *Giant* is an exception. Though a proof of his gift as a monumetalist, it was not followed by other statues of the same structure and large dimensions for the artist received no other commission which could demand a similar effort. In this, the Romanian statuary suffered a great loss for the projects for monuments Paciurea left (for which he received no commission) clearly demonstrate thay would have become invaluable monumental works of art if created. His gift as a monumentalist can be clearly seen in the portraits he carved. The portrait of *Beethoven*, for instance, his face contorted by passion, like a genuine spirit of the storm, *Tolstoy*, a demiurge who seems to be contemplating the world with quiet wisdom, or *Ibsen*, on whose face one can read deep concentration, they are all effigies created with the obvious romantic participation of the artist. Paciurea's portraits cannot belong to one and the same category: each model requires a peculiar treatment and from the romantic unrest to the classical sereinty there is a large variety of forms with him.

The tragedy of the first world war had a deep effect upon Paciurea. Sensitive by nature, wounded by the people's lack of interest in his work, he reacted dramatically to the sufferings of mankind. His sculpture was to become a commentary on man's condition; surrounded by evil genii man's life, Paciurea believes, is always in danger. The symbol of this danger is *The God of War*, represented as a young man with sunken eyes powerful jaws, a cruel mouth, a frowning forehead; the skull on his head, replacing a helment, clearly shows that the god is the impersonation of death.

Then followed the *chimeras*, images of an original mythology, projections of an adverse reality which the artist, terrified, turned away from in revulsion.

They were fantastic beings, some of them threatening, some others deeply poetic, created by a man agrieved at what he saw in the world. Some of Paciurea's exegetes consider that these works anticipate surrealism, unknown to the generation of the 1920s, which "may have enriched this artistic movement if the work of the Romanian sculptor had enjoyed a wider circulation in the respective epoch and if it had possessed an adequate critical programme".

The Sphinx, executed in 1913, some time before he started carving his chimeras, illustrates the artists's state of mind during that period: a man with forceful features, scanning the world in search of answers to his anxious questions. He is doomed to ask himself harrowing questions. and that is why his face looks so human and his claws, made for tearing victimes to pieces, are placed so near to his breast. Late enough, in 1931 a short time before his death, he modelled a massive *Pan*, a bearded head, a genuine impersonation of nature; Paciurea does not make of him the frenetic deity of ancient times but the embodiment of an ancient world of simple joys, who could embrace the whole world, the old man whose death is announced by Heine in his romantic poetry. Paciurea's impressionistic modelling technique does not imply that his stylistic horizon was limited in any way to adhering to Rodin's art.

Paciurea's work was considered to follow the evolutive line Baroque-Romanticism-Expressionism, opposed therefore to the classicist line. This is true as far as his themes are concerned, but only partly true as regards his technique. This evolution coincides with an uninterrupted simplification of his means of expression: in the 1920s the surface became smoother, and the statues acquired a clear-cut volume prevailing over the agitated treatment of the surface; it is not the line but the volume that conveys a state of mind. In this respect, Paciurea's work belongs to an essential direction of modern sculpture i.e. the reinterpretation of form, the transition from *representation* to *substitution*.

Ion Frunzetti characterized Paciurea's work in the following terse words: "The fantastic permutation of bodies and objects subjected to a new type of space, the time-space of modern man, torm by the anxieties of his transience and of the world's alike, their transfiguration in vapours, in tragically contorted volutes of smoke, these are only a few characteristics of Paciurea's art, enough to proclaim far and wide his supreme modernity." Sharing the consciousness of his time, Paciurea is one of the great reformers of the old conception concerning the relationships between volume, space and time.

This is a renewal he produced concomitantly with his younger contemporary *Constantin Brâncuși* (1876—1957). The numerous studies on his work are widely different in details and points of view; yet they all share a conclusion couched in unequivocal terms: Brâncușian art is one of the essential sources on which 20th century visual civilization is based. The significances of his work imply one of the most important problems of modern culture: the manner in which the aspirations towards totality are fulfilled, the affirmative meaning the human mind has sought for such a long time. It was quite natural that in a cultural context in which many artistic trends laid stress on the ephemeral and fragility, the ardent need for certitudes should direct art towards the forms which had acquired a status in a confrontation lasting for centuries on end. The return to ancestral structures does not of necessity mean an exoticism determined by the artists's desire to be original.

Seen in this light, the graphic and pictorial signs or the notch in a piece of wood of archaic art, which Brâncuși often resorted to, had belonged to his

own environment: he knew their deep significance, deeper than the simple ornamental effect which could impress other people coming from outside this civilization. It was the same with Picasso, for the abrupt simplifications of Catalan art appeared to him like natural modulations of an entire syntax familiar to him. And due to an extraordinary coincidence, in 1907, when Picasso was painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, Brâncuși was carving *The Wisdom of the Earth*; in the painting of the Spaniard, the Iberian mask introduced an element quite suited to the reformulation of the aesthetics of the human face; in the sculpture of Brâncuși, a strange deity, coming from age-old folk mythology, stands watch at the secret frontiers between the worlds.

The former student of the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, trained by Ion Georgescu and, after his death, by Vladimir Hegel, started on a long journey — most of it on foot — in order to learn his trade in Paris. This detail would not be so important were it not illustrative of the life of an artist who followed his own uninfluenced road, which in the first place meant that he wished to proclaim his desire to be independent. Yet no matter how little interest he showed — as was often said — in the aesthetic movements of the time (he still adhered to some while refusing to be tempted by others), Brâncuși was not isolated from the entire cultural atmosphere in Romania during his student years. Maybe the significance of the Independent Artists' Exhibition opened in Bucharest in 1896 has not been sufficiently studied; it is certain however that at the end of the 19th century, the separation from official art had already started assuming forms which demonstrated the maturity of a mentality able to distinguish between tradition and epigonism. To this must be added, no doubt, a trend created by Grigorescu's rustic themes, a trend which, though not devoid of conventionalism, was supported by the group formed around a magazine, "Semănătorul" (The Sower), one of the most influential publications in the history of Romanian culture. The neo-romantic ideas of "Semănătorul" promoted an attitude plainly opposed to urban civilization, and glorified instead life in the countryside.

The return to the world of the village did not always occur so definitly as in the case of Brâncuși; but the necessity of reassessing national art, the opposition to academism thriving under the sheltering wing of officialdom, were the components of an aesthetic attitude typical of the turn of the century. With his different methods Brâncuși created the same work as Luchian's entire generation of artists had done. Brâncuși came from an area of folk culture which was able to oppose the picturesque simplifications of the artistic "folklorism" in the early decades of the century. His biographers have underlined the significance of the folk culture preserved in this area: the elements of architecture, sculpture in wood, embroideries and fabrics, balades and doinas in this area recall a pastoral civilization which goes back to the beginnings of Romanian history.

The hypothesis according to which Brâncuși left Romania because his contemporaries did not understand him is without any foundation. It is true that one year before he left for Paris those who had commissioned him to make the bust of a medical general reproached him with fact that the bust was not a good likeness and that he had not added the decorations of the illustrious model. We do not believe that — as is sometimes said — such lack of understanding, together with the deceiving academist vision of his teachers, discouraged him and made him leave Bucharest. It is true that artistic education at the Bucharest School was based — particularly, after

the death of Ion Georgescu — on an academist interpretation, but the atmosphere in the studios of art schools was everywhere the same at the time. In fact, at the beginning of the 20th century, the memory of the difficulties Rodin had with his *Balzac* and *The Burghers of Calais* was still fresh and showed that it was difficult, no matter where, for any new artistic trend to assert itself. It is also hard to believe that the young artist was dissatisfied with the lack of any important commission for monuments he could produce in the future; the fact is that there were not many sculptors who, at the young age of 27 could boast any commission of a monument to be placed in a public square; his generation was not devoid of such opportunities; Paciurea, for instance, was commissioned to carve his *Giant* when he had not yet turned thirty-three.

A photograph of Brâncuși's studio made in 1905, shows a group of works (very many indeed if we take into account the fact that he had come to France only a year before) in which we can detect — as is but natural — both reminiscences of what he had learnt in Bucharest and traces of Rodin's modelling technique, the most powerful trend of modern French sculpture at the time. Brâncuși assimilated contemporary art warily enough, for he did not seek a general conclusion, but answers to questions he asked himself and noted little by little, until the moment came to synthesize then into a vision which owed nothing to anybody.

Maybe the first signs of a new orientation should be sought in his *Bust of a Child* of 1906: the same as with all the sculptures executed until that moment, the forms are built along clearly defined axes; yet the slight inclination of the head, the half closed eyes — with too much light perhaps — the lips parted in surprise, lend an unconventional innocence to the entire image. The impression is enhanced by the effort of the opposition between the modelling of the coat — in long lines on which light seems to be gliding — and the modelling of the face, reinterpreting it in a discontinuous rhythm, in an almost pictorial interplay of shadows. Childhood (often suffering childhood) is a theme often reiterated in Brâncuși's art, as late as the mid 1920s. The evolution of contours in these portraits clearly shows a gradual simplification, a concentration of the expression, a gradual elimination of gestures. It is true that the portrait is at first an opportunity for him to study the dramatic intersecting of angles, of the axes along which volumes are organized. However, a variant from 1907 of the sculpture entitled *Agony* shows that Brâncuși had already begun to give his attention to the syntax, the relationships between the elements, more than to the expressivity of each morphological element taken separately.

The turning point the years 1906—1908 represent is illustrated by the *Prayer*, a sculpture which critics have long debated on. It comprises in its dramatically simplified forms the elements of an artistic orientation designed to represent the beginning of modern European sculpture. According to Ion Frunzetti, Brâncuși achieved, in an expresive synthesis meant to convey emotion, the creation of a symbol of the respective feeling, without the help of mimic or pantomimic gestures. The body is transformed into a symbol, it loses its anatomical features, it is enveloped in a kind of impalpable spiritual substance.

In the calm collectedness devoid of any inner excruciating pain, one could detect the wise mediation in the face of death present in the Romanian lyrical poetry. The artist himself said the following once: "Pure poetry may be a prayer, but I know that the prayer of our old Oltenian peasants was a form

of meditation." Humility seems to clothe the woman in *The Prayer* in a rugged garb of straight lines which meet at sharp angles, barely softened by the sensitive modelling of the surface. Anatomical details are eliminated not only out of the desire to achieve a formal stylization or to concentrate on the essentials of construction. The symbols of death, from the beginning of the Middle Ages to the early Renaissance (and then, with dramatic grandiloquence in the period of the Baroque) was predominantly based in European art on everything opposed to voluptuonsness, to sensuality, in a word to everything *carnal*.

Yet there is more than all this in Brâncuși's sculpture. *The Prayer* does not try at all to suggest fear of death; the fleshless Gothic skeleton meant vanishing into nothingness, the pallor of corpses, explicit in the art expressionism drew its inspiration from, implied an exacerbation of fright. With Brâncuși, sadness is ascetic, a sort of dignified *retenue*: no contraction disturbs the grave, immaculate tension of the form. One could say that such concise and pure image of death could originate only in the spiritual area in which *Mioriţa* (The Ewe Lamb) was created, where the betrothal and marriage in death celebrated in the old ballad represent the wisdom of this passage and do not need any consolation.

The year 1907 is the most significant moment for the creation of a Brâncușian vision. *The Kiss* he carved in 1907 adds a new dimension to the creation of a sculpture designed to absorb essences and to oppose the ephemeral, the bright but fragille effect of light. Maybe nowhere else in Brâncuși's artistic creation does the *materiality* of sculpture appear so clearly; and yet the theme, as interpreted by Brâncuși, contains no other implications than a powerful spiritual elevation. There is no need to recall here how carnal the embrace of Rodin's personages was in the hymn he dedicated to spring, love and eternal youth, in order to discover that the Romanian artist drew on other sources than those of the European sculptor contemporary with him. Brâncuși's *The Kiss* is, above all, a symbol carved *in stone*. None of its meanings can become separated from the features of the material it was carved from. Stone belongs to the earth; the axis on the two sides of which the volumes of this emblematic sculpture are symmetrically built seems to be the force line of gravitation which draws it towards the ground. When the critics use the word "monolithic" to describe *The Kiss*, they do not use a metaphor, they mean precisely a block of stone powerfully thrust into space.

In 1925 Brâncuși reverted to the same theme. What impresses one when comparing the two sculptures is the importance the artist attaches to *the eyes* in the later work. Sketched with a thin line hardly visible in the grain of the stone in the work of 1907, they become the dominant element in the work of 1925. This is not a merely different expression of the architecture of forms and of aesthetic functionality; these eyes, wide open, unite to form one immense eye.

The eye is the symbol of the civilizations which glorify light and the sun, of the cultures in which the miracle of creation takes place far from the threatening universe of the shadows. And, later on, in the monumental sculptures at Tîrgu Jiu, in *The Gate* called *of the Kiss*, the embrace of the two bodies, the same as the two halves of a seed, assumes the perfect shape of the circle which describes the sun, yet it also unveils its origin in this sign of the wakefulness of reason, the eye in the older *Kiss* of 1925.

This simple block of stone revalued in fact the treasures of an ancient civilization, the same civilization which proclaimed the fusion of the mineral and the organic world and which, in Brâncuși's sculpture "celebrates — in the

fine words of Dan Hăulică — the marriage of man with the elements, making of this art a link in the chain of cosmic communion."

Here is in this respect a telling remark by Herbert Read: "A form can be vital without implicitly becoming a work of art; any animal or human being, any tree or flower is alive, but the work of art is, in a sense, a concentration of this vital force. It is this distinction that caused Brâncuși's work to become so important for the development of contemporary sculpture." Mistery and the wisdom of the earth are embodied, in Brâncuși's art, in a deity coming from remote times, from deep strata in which the civilizations of the Cyclades, of Africa and Oceania, of Europe communicate.

The horizon for the understanding of this art opens wider when somebody tries to solve the enigma floating over the innocent features of the face, over the eyes which look at the world all around without wondering at it in any way. The world "does not contain any other enigma maybe than the enigma of man becoming a human being", as philosopher Constantin Noica put it. It is a wisdom *of the earth* and we cannot imagine it otherwise than emerging mysteriously from the earth. "It is as though Brâncuși had not carved the coming into life of a thing on the earth, but the coming into life, into being of the Earth itself."

This is in fact, the mystery *The Wisdom of the Earth* celebrates: the terrestrial stone comprises in it the meanings of the existence of all beings, of the metamorphosis of the mineral into the vital.

Pierre de Boisdeffre noted the following: "Brâncuși rediscovers the essential lines of the primitives of Africa and Oceania, creating a bridge that spans contemporary art, Roman sculpture and fetishes. To the anthropomorphous art we have inherited from the Greeks, Brâncuși offers an art suited to the Cosmos, the way modern science and a nature having recovered its original nudity show it to us." This exact characterization of Brâncușian art lacks only one reference — decisive in this case — to the severe hieratism of the traditional Romanian vision which in *The Wisdom of the Earth* springs from the age-old mystery of the creation of life. Brâncușian sculpture is not a synthesis of *constituted forms*, but a rediscovery, in the strata of original culture, of the factors modelling these forms. The images of Brâncușian art resemble those created in different parts of the world; this is not due to the direct adoption of elements belonging to those remote cultures, but to the fact that they have a common remote origin. Mircea Eliade wrote the following: "Brâncuși seems to have discovered the fount of Romanian inspiration after his encounter with certain "primitive" and archaic creations, which many critics consider to be paradoxical. His genius is due to the fact that he knew where to seek the real source of the forms he felt he was able to create."

Prometheus, a sculpture he executed in 1911, has its source in the same remote ages of mankind. The martyrdom the titan suffers is not expressed by the painful contraction of the muscles: the head is a piece of marble smoothed round as it were by the water which has effaced details of the portrait. It is true that Brâncuși returns to a primordial myth, different, however, from the ancient myth of Prometheus who had stolen fire from heaven. The piece of stone, coming from an archaic civilization, older than the story of the hero at whose liver the eagle kept tearing, prolongs a theme often treated during the early decades of the century, the highly, characteristic theme of children's heads. In those sculptures of his early beginnings, in which the portraits' physiognomy was not modified in any way by a smile or by weeping, one could detect his aspiration towards essential forms.

In 1908, Brâncuși had carved the head of a woman sleeping. The delicate features, so calm and quiet, (recalling maybe the soft form in the sculptures of Medardo Rosso) are almost indistinguishable from the mass of marble in which the traces of the chisel are still visible. We seem to be witnessing an effort of the form which wishes to tear itself away from the hard matter.

Two years later, *Muse Sleeping* was to perform a miracle: the elongated head, hardly touches the surface of its base, in a fragile equilibrium; the muse seems to be floating bathed in a light all her own, far from the matter which has created her. The sculpture of 1908 was *the sleep*, the one of 1910 is *the dream*. *Prometheus*, the myth of childhood, the metaphor of the dream, they all overlap. A variant in marble of a *Child Asleep* (1908) had been placed on a wooden socle representing the geometrical rhythms of pyramid frustums united at their small base. It is a surprising work, owing to the representation still detailed of the portrait; but the eye-lids are hardly visible and thus the inner world merges into the outer world. Significantly enough, the portraits of children had anticipated the dream of the *Sleeping Muse*.

If *Prometheus* "represents the head of a child overburdened by the Promethean destiny" — as Sidney Geist puts it — , if the position of the head is almost similar to the one in the portrait suggesting pain and *torture*, then creation itself, the childhood of mankind, — in the sense of suffering — means purity as well. The legend of the first man springs from the spirtual purity of the child.

The art of Constantin Brâncuși brings to the fore again the significance of the representation of the human body as presented in the great epochs of world sculpture. "The marriage of man with the elements" that Dan Hăulică wrote about, is not a simple metaphor with Brâncuși; human beings express themselves by means of permanences and to define them as a function of the archetypes of the flesh becomes a pointless discussion in the case of Brâncuși (the same as in the case of Paciurea's *Chimeras*). *Prometheus* and *the heads of children* do not suffer the consequences of the endless quirks of an individual destiny but, like Paciurea's chimeras, they proclaim themselves masters of time which is condensed in the forms essences assume. The people he represents do not express an attitude only, a feeling, a thought: they are *the feeling* or *the thought* itself. Brâncuși's vocation is to express ideas and feelings through tridimensional matter, excluding the human body which, for milleniums on end, had been an intermediate term of expression. Ion Frunzetti correctly noted that "When creating spatial objects Brâncuși competed with nature, creating at the same time magnetic echoes in the surrounding space for the main lines of the statue, for its axes and not only for its surface."

Brancusian sculpture did not repudiate, in fact, the beauty of the human body; he sought, however, the lines which integrated it into the order of the world. A marble sculpture executed in 1909 (today at the Art Museum in Craiova) offers us an opportunity to dwell longer on the problem. The elongated curves of *The Thigh* incorporate the miraculous blend of sensuousness and purity to be found in the nude of the *Flute Singer* on the Ludovisi Throne: chaste and robust, the thigh Brâncuși carved is not at all" a violation of human anatomy" as someone believed. The smooth surface, as seen when looking at it from the left, is the embodiment of the perfection of a human body, a perfection 5th century Greece strove to attain. Seen from the right, how-

ever, *The Thigh* looks like a piece of rough stone in which there is no sign yet of life. Like in *The Sleep* of 1908 the human forms have not yet emerged from the amorphouse matter.

The Thigh is the body escaping from the tyranny of the flesh and, at the same time, the flesh coming alive from the imobility of the stone. In the delicate and tender figuration of a woman's body, forms suddenly appear rationalized; by observing and following nature, Brâncuși goes beyond the forms of nature. Henry Moore was to describe the significance of his forerunners's art in the following words: "From the Gothic on, European sculpture has been overgrown with weeds, moss all sorts of excrescences on its surface which have concealed its form. It was Brâncuși's special mission to rid us of it all and to make us again aware of form... Apart from its intrinsic value, Brâncuși's work has also had an historical importance in the development of contemporary culture."

With Brâncuși, the mystery of the transformation of form into idea takes place under the watchful eyes of his *Maiastra*; the light that melts the outlines of objects miraculously marrying them to the air, fills the body of the bird — a magic character in Romanian folklore — and the bird becomes almost transparent. When looking at it closely *Maiastra* appears to be a pitcher filled with light. The prolongation of wings and legs forms a narrow base supporting the body with its round chest; the neck and the head recall some flying beast from an archaic age, assuming the fascinating aspect of a serpent or a dragon that can kill or give life by simply looking at you. That is what *the birds* in the Romanian folk tales of old look like. That is what they look like in the stylized images on the Romanian carpets. *Maiastra* is not a *bird* "in general", it is *a particular bird*, the bird Romanian folklore endowed with magic powers. As if to stress the Romanian identity of the bird, Brâncuși — in two variants dating from 1912 — placed the sculpture on bases which resume the play of rhombuses on the pillars in the verandahs of the houses in the villages situated in the hilly regions of Oltenia.

It was noted that the subsequent modifications of the *Maiastra* led — through continuous stylizing — to the forms of the *Bird in Space* of the 1920s. The explanation of the succession of themes from *Maiastra* to the other Bird should be sought in the words of the artist himself: "I wanted the *Maiastra* to raise her head without thereby expressing any pride, vainglory or provocation. It was the most difficult problem and only after a long effort was I able to express this movement integrated into her upward darting flight." The works deriving — morphologically or ideologically — from the magic bird, belong to the sky more perfectly than the Maiastra. The bases are conceived in such a way as to enhance the impression of the vertical movement; the fact that, as compared to the pedestals of the 1912 *Maiastra*, the base of the *Bird* created in 1915 introduces a stricter geometry of elongated polyhedrons is quite significant; her head raised in the direction of the sky, *Maiastra* is about to fly up. "I do not create birds, but flights," Brâncuși used to say. Beyond any mythological implications, his birds strove to change into ideas, subjecting themselves to those inward urges that entitled the artist to say: "When working on the stone you discover the spirit of the substance the measure of its own existence: the sculptor's hand is led by the substance he is working on."

First *Maiastra*, a creature belonging both to the air and to the earth, her wings pressed to the round body. Then the marble of 1915, with its elon-

gated body, the bird about to take wing, its call rising in the air. And then, for twenty-five years, *the birds in space*, contours suggesting flight ever more clearly, looking like a simple graphic sign — in the sculpture created in 1940, today at the Peggy Guggenheim Foundation in Venice — a letter written on air, having defeated gravitation, torn away from the earth. Brâncuși's birds it was said, are "powerfully rationalized versions of natural creature". Lines of force of an always vertical motion, they are at the same time living beings which leave a trace of their passage through the air. Lionello Venturi saw in them a force that renders geometrical form tangible, gives it life and makes it human.

That it was not a mere decorative vocation is demonstrated by the fact that in 1918 Brâncuși executed an entire column consisting of severe rhythmical frustums of a pyramid. He called it *The Endless Column*. How can the infinite be comprised in a piece of oakwood two metres high? It is obvious that the name does not describe the dimensions but the geometrical structure of the column; the elements of the construction can be reiterated, one can add to them as many as possible without for that matter disturbing the equilibrium. Two years after the first *Column*, Brâncuși created another and placed it in Streichen's garden, at Voulangis: the three modules have become nine and it has become more strikingly supple, but the equilibrium of the whole is not lost, despite its much more slender profile. For the interior proportions have not changed: if we take it as representing the value of the small base, then the side of the large base of the pyramid frustum is 2, and the height of each module is 4; and if we prolong the nonparallel sides, the distance between the intersecting points will be 8. We have therefore 1:2:4:8...and the progresion seems to be endless indeed.

It seems to be endless for one more reason: because the points where the prolongation of the sides intersect are to be found on the horizontal — the biggest — side of the modules above and below: each constructive element begins at the point where the preceding one ends. That is why the *Column* of 1918 comprises — in its three modules — the idea of the infinite, of the uninterrupted creation and of completion. The motif (unknown to most of the foreign exegetes) could originate in the funeral poles set at the head of the graves in the churchyards on both sides of the mountains, situated between the Olt and the Jiu rivers: beginning and end, transformation and completion...

The geometry of Brâncuși is no detachment from nature, but a rediscovery of its inner forces which make up the rational structure of things. In fact everything is nature in his sculpture. "The art of Brâncuși has always found its sureness and *raison d'être* in reality, never outside it. It is the external world that set his imagination in motion." The remark belongs to Christian Zervos, while Alexander Calder, one of the sculptors who has created a new image of art in this century, wrote: "I like Brâncuși's works very much. They are so close to the forms we meet in nature, in geometry!"

Brâncuși himself said once: "Art is no escape from reality, it is a flight towards a new reality."

We must say that the morphology of Brancusian art towards the end of the second decade of the 20th century reveals a complex conception which is not due only to the evolution of his previous style. We learn from philosopher Grigore Popa's recollections about his meetings with the sculptor, that Brâncuși did not seem to be a lover of African art, that „he avoided exoticism" saying that "it is not safe to be in contact with foreign unknown things."

Nevertheless it is obvious that, in his studies and investigations, in his desire to discover the creative essences of art, he reached the deep strata of primordial civilizations, the sources of the specific structures of all the ancient cultures. It was stated once that "he created his work like a thinker and a witness of the birth of original forms as well." That is why an artist whose creative outlook was based on "a deep certainty as to the world and life" (as Dan Hăulică put it) could not adopt, in essence, the suggestions of dadaism — a destructive current by definition.

In 1916 (as also in the following years to a large extent) the artists making up the Zürich group, who had issued the dada manifesto, sought to create forms that could annul the formal distinction between painting, sculpture and "the object discovered." The images Schwitters created were no longer paintings, "the same as a relief made of painted wood by Arp is neither a sculpture nor a painting", as Hubert Reads puts it. In any case such a conception could not attract Brâncuși, who believed in the expressive function of volumes, of the plastic sign set in space. The dadaists — as one of the most important of them Jean Arp, was to recall in 1958 — had resorted to African art, for they believed that through it they could "simply voice their protest against the rationalization of man." As to the conception of the significance of creation nothing seems to be so definitely opposed to the "total vision" of "the object discovered" than the work of Brâncuși. The Dadaists interpreted art as an object offered to them; Brâncusi, as an effort meant to secure knowledge. The distinction is quite obvious.

In the whole of Brâncuși's work, the monumental complex of Târgu Jiu represents the quintessence of the artist's creative thinking. Barbu Brezianu, an exegete of Brâncuși's work, mentions the existence of some old wooden columns as early as 1909, which means that the idea germinated in his mind for almost thirty years. A severe, rigorous column, a metallic axis connecting the earth to the sky, this sculpture is a victory of geometry.

To anyone walking around the column, the octahedral modules suggest, in succession, some earlier works by Brâncuși — *Mdlle Pogany's* hairdo (the bronze created in 1933, today in Philadelphia), the glorious zigzag of *The Cock* (whose first variant dates from 1922) or the sinewy body of *Adam*, the sculpture which represented the man who "tills the land, sweats profusely and curses" as Brâncuși put it.

However the significances of the *Column* cannot be separated from those of the entire statuary to which this monument belongs. The vastest sculptural ensemble in our century is dedicated to the heroes who fell during World War I. The sixteen modules were sometimes considered to be "a string of rosary beads or litanies" expressing "the endless gratitude for the sacrifice of those killed in action." The custom in many Romanian villages to place tall wooden poles — with similar geometrical forms carved on them — on the grave of young people was also correctly mentioned (see Barbu Brezianu). Thirty years after *The Prayer*, Brâncuși was again paying his reverent homage to the dead, with the age-old pious devotion of the Romanian peasant...

Mathematical calculations have demonstrated that the ratio between the height of the *Column* (29.33 m) and that of each module (1.80 m) is 16.2, which is the value of the *golden section* multiplied by ten. The mathematical precision of the ancient builders on the shores of the Mediterranean is embodied in a modern structure created by the man about whom Jean Cassou wrote that "with his inspired chisel he split the history of world sculpture into

two, placing *The Endless Column* of endless beauty of the Romanian genius at the boundary between classical and modern art."

The presence in this ensemble of a *Gate of the Kiss* is quite significant. We believe that it justifies the conclusion that the supreme meaning of glory is love. For the monument is a triumphal arch whose proportions are those of the Roman arches (of the arch of Janus Quadrifons for instance). The motif of the embracing bodies is resumed here in a simplified form, it becomes the sign of the germinating seed, of the eye that sees, the symbol of the wakeful eye which understands everything. Love symbolically came to fruition in the centre of the ensemble which glorifies the life after death of the heroes. Love also represents the moment when death is defeated. In 1916 — we learn from Barbu Brezianu — "the sculptor was contemplating building a real *Column of the Kiss*. A variant from 1933 comprises all the motifs that were to appear on the sides of the *Gate :* the four stylized bodies forming two semicircles sheltered as it were by the husk of a seed, the round lines (so close in form to the ornaments on the eaves of a peasant cottage) supported by the strong body of the pillar with its square cross section, undulating under the ceiling and forming at a certain moment, a sort of strong graceful capital; the noble simplicity of the articulation connecting the pillar of the peasant house with the wooden ceiling is resumed here with the open understanding of the functional beauty of folk architecture.

The Table of Silence too, the work that brings to an end the perspective line of the ensemble, is the answer of a meditation which can be perceived in the artist's earlier works as well. Its contour suggested to the sculptor "the closed curvature of the circle which brings together, closer and unites." It was also represented (superimposed on the geometrical motif, we recognize in the *Column*) by the wooden pedestal of the *Child Asleep* from 1908; it is the round piece of stone, the socle of *Leda* executed in 1920, of *The Seal* made in 1936. Twelve stools are placed round the table, like the hours on the face of a clock. In this monumental ensemble created in memory of the fallen heroes, the line of the *Table* recalls the Dacian Sanctuary at Sarmizegetusa; a civilization created under the sign of the cult of the Sun laid this form at the foundation of its temples, a form which, the same as in other ancient civilizations, meant perfection. But the *Table* also recalls the rather unusual form of the table in the altar of the church in Hobița, Brâncuși's native place; two civilizations met here too, in a synthesis peculiar to an entire type of thinking of the Romanian people.

The stools, however, are placed too far from the table to suggest the peaceful scene of a peasant supper. The low table becomes a symbol in a ritual prayer for the dead; the quiet scene of the family gathered around the table acquires mythical dimensions. Like an altar of old (the memory of the Hobița altar comes up of itself), the *Table* brings together as it were those who meditate, eager to learn the causes of despair and fall. *The Column*, like a pillar of the sky, rises in memory of the dead; *The Gate of the Kiss* glorifies love and fruitfulness; *The Table* is an invitation to meditation, its solar circle tracing the all-inclussive form of the unity of the world.

The alley connecting the triumphal arch with the silent congregation of people round the table is the only one marked by other sculptures; the thirty stools constitute an open circle; the bottom halves rest on the ground and their top halves absorb the light like so many cups. In the stone clepsidras around the table the flow of the sand grains has stopped for ever; the

time becomes congealed into a calm structure of a simple geometry (Brâncuși, I was told, would have liked the stools to suggest more clearly the shape of two peasant kettles joined at the base). The layers of a rustic, ancestral civilization are present in these symbolic measures of eternity.

It was through Brâncuși that Romanian art gained international recognition. Unfortunately, none of his great predecessors (painters Grigorescu, Andreescu, Luchian or his contemporary Paciurea) whose thinking could have attracted the attention of the European artistic world if presented in due time in exhibitions or well thought out analyses have won the renown they would have amply deserved.

Disciples: Innovators and Epigones

Of all the great artists who lived at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, it was Grigorescu alone who exerted an immediate and profound influence on Romanian art. The prestige of his work increased after his death, powerfully influencing the work of his followers: although he was no mentor of any group or professor at the Fine Arts Academy, Grigorescu created a genuine school of painting and influenced the development of trends in all the domains of art. This was not due only to the value of Grigorescu's art, but also to the conclusions the ideology of the *Semănătorul* — quite powerful at the time — derived from the œuvre of the master.

Semănătorul (the Sower), a magazine published between 1901 and 1910, promoted from the start a literature of rural and historical inspiration, predominantly idyllic after 1908. The patriarchal vision of a rustic life was set in contrast with the urban civilization, the "tentacular" town. The same conception can be traced, under various forms, in the world culture at the turn of the century; it is present, for instance, in the poetry Francis James, expressing the same distrust of mechanistic civilization, the same joy of the simple life in the country side. The ideology promoted by *Semănătorul* is therefore one of the trends anticipating in a way, European expressionism.

The argument the partisans of *Semănătorul* brought in support of the thesis according to which the rustic universe ought to be the predominant source of artistic inspiration, was not only Grigorescu's work but also that of his epigones, often steeped in conventionalism and tempted by the picturesque. As a matter of fact *Semănătorul* could detect a more complete illustration of its own aesthetic ideas in the inclination towards idealizing village life, so obvious in the paintings of many artists whose vision took shape in the shade of Grigorescu's artistic creation.

This reciprocal play of influences goes to explain why the tendency towards the idyllic treatment of rural life persisted in painting after Grigorescu; tributary in a large measure to the ideas of *Semănătorul*, the vision of Grigorescu's epigones, who attempted to reconstitute the art of the master out of unimportant fragments, pervaded large areas of the Romanian painting in the early decades of the 20th century. The numerous literary and artistic societies set up at the time were to reflect the ideas circulated by *Semănătorul*; "*Tinerimea artistică*" (Artistic Youth), set up in 1902, was

no doubt the one which influenced directly the orientation in point of themes of an important section of Romanian painting at the beginning of the century. Although it had not worked out a clear artistic programme, although the work of its adherents did not express the same artistic creed, *Tinerimea* facilitated for a long time, the diffusion of an art in which original touches were naturally often present (several worthy artists had their works on display at the exhibitions opened by the society), an art however characterized especially by the uninspired illustration of "Semănătorist" theses.

Sometimes — with *Hipolit Strîmbu* (1871—1934) for instance — the themes taken over from Grigorescu combined with a mannerism coming from Munich; in the rustic subjects the *plein-air* is suggested with the help of academist means of expression. Placed at a strange intersecting point of academism and impressionism, the work of *Arthur Verona* (1868—1946) who studied painting in Munich and at the Julian Academy in Paris, took over from Grigorescu his interest in country life. Nevertheless, what — with Grigorescu — was an ardent desire for the outward projection of the inner world of the personages, becomes — with Verona — an effort to render ethnographic details in precise pictorial terms.

Even in the painting of artists who, formally, did not adhere to the programme of *Semănătorul*, like *George Demetrescu-Mirea* (1852—1934), one can trace echoes of a "post-Grigorescu" vision. Appreciated mostly for his portraits (executed in the technique of luminous covers and chiaroscuro he had learned from his master, Carolus Duran, a successful Parisian painter), Mirea was to tackle subjects inspired by peasant life as well, which he conceived in the sense of illustrations, or cold, monumental allegories.

It goes without saying that the art of Grigorescu's epigones did not represent — not even within the circle of "*Tinerimea artistică*" — the only way of dealing with reality; significantly enough, his art combines with the mannerist and sentimentalist trends prevailing in the painting of other European schools of the time, facilitating their appearance in the Romanian art at the beginning of the century. An interesting illustration of the above is the work of *Alexandru Satmari* (1871—1933): he did not submit to the influence of Grigorescu, though not because of a conception of his own, but because he could not decide what style to adopt, because he adopted various means of expressions, sometimes in the same painting, revealing a surprisingly eclectic vision ranging from the Pre-Raphaelites to Impressionism.

The opposition to academism, which was protected by officialdom, was one of the items in the programme of "*Tinerimea artistică*." In this light the orientation towards new poetic essences appears quite natural, and the manner of interpreting the peasant's spiritual universe in Grigorescu's painting satisfied such a fundamental requirement. Of the painters who managed to preserve their individual character in an epoch when the "post-Grigorescu" aesthetics was prevalent, we should mention *Abgar Baltazar* (1880—1909), an intellectual with a thorough professional training, painter and art critic, who died very young. He executed romantic historical compositions and portraits from the world of the Bucharest suburbs interpreted with a burlesque vein, demonstrating his gift for capturing social types with a fine sense of humour. With *Dimitrie Hîrlescu* (1873—1923) the genre scenes breathe an intimate poesy enhanced by a warm palette; sometimes, character is defined through colour, through the manner in which tones are outlined, a reflex of Pechstein's expressionism no doubt, whose acquaintance he had made while he studied in Germany. *Dimitrie Mihăilescu* (1872—1922) too

was able to avoid the consequences of the "post-Grigorescu" influence; his landscapes evince a sure sense of nature; his ability to dicover the character of a landscape combines, in personal vision, the elements peculiar to the art of Theodore Rousseau with those of Andreescu.

However, the general aspect of Romanian culture at the beginning of the century cannot be defined only by the influence of the ideas spread by *Semănătorul* and the reaction of writers, artists and scientists to those ideas. The books and literary magazines acquainted their readers with modern culture, the young painters back from the great fine arts schools of Europe grafted the universal movement of ideas on Romanian traditions. The phenomenon, already popular at the time of "the men of '48", had assumed specific forms in the art of Grigorescu and Andreescu; yet now it gained unprecedented scope. Both the positive aesthetic tenets of the *Semănătorul* movement — pleading for an art imbued with the specific values of national tradition — and the urge to assimilate — in original syntheses — the achievements of contemporary European culture will develop, based on the general imperatives of Romanian culture. The opposition to the petty bourgeois mannerism made artists tackle tragical themes often inspired by the life of townspeople. Some artists, grouped around "*Tinerimea artistică*" for instance, dealt with themes describing town life, exceeding the aesthetic programme of the group they had joined.

The manner in which Romanian culture grasped the significance of the German "Jugendstil" illustrates its responsiveness to the great world cultures. "Art 1900" was a deliberate attempt to restore drawing to its predominant function in composition, interpreted as if it were a complicated architecture. The personages are set on the same plane, as if on a stage, silhouetted against a background in which the laws of perspective are replaced by a flat disposition of volumes like in the painting of the Early Renaissance or of the English Pre-Raphaelites.

Romanian painting added to the "Art Nouveau" its narrative-allegorical interpretation of national history, with echoes of Romanian traditional mediaeval painting. However, the construction has a marked static balance; the personages are juxtaposed to form narrative scenes whose heroes seem to walk past one another in petrified attitudes, never turning to look at each other. The most important contribution of the new style was its genuine revival of monumental painting. The influence of the great historian Nicolae Iorga is worth mentioning in this respect. His vision helped artists rediscover the values of national history and, at the same time, the fruitful Byzantine traditions of Romanian culture.

Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck (1879—1969) for instance, who assimilated some experiences of the Munich school adapting them to a suppler line and a clearer synthesis of the composition, benefited by the ideas of professor Iorga. The mural in the auditorium of the Academy of Economic Sciences was created at a time when professor Iorga had already stressed the importance of themes such as *The History of Romanian Trade*, i.e. the very subject the artist had chosen. She met with difficulties because of the inadequate surface she had to cover with paintings; yet she solved the problem by a spiraling development of the narrative, based on a firm logic of rhythms. The mural panels in the Storck Museum are one more evidence of her inclination to a clear construction, in which the volumes have clear-cut contours and the scene is filled with allegorical personages wearing costumes recalling some-

times the plastic representations of the Romanian fairy-tales at the beginning of the century. The artist's easel paintings bear the stamp of her monumental vision; the form is simplified, linear, the gestures contained and sculptural, but the painter remains, above all, a pioneer of monumental art in Romania.

A little later, under the same influence of Nicolae Iorga, *Olga Greceanu* (1890—1976) came closer to Byzantine tradition; her frescoes — one of them in the great hall of the School of Architecture and especially the second one decorating the façade of the History Institute, two edifices which significantly demonstrate the orientation towards the reappraisal of the Romanian traditional style of arhitecture — evince a solid conception of construction. The figures are elegantly stylized and the compositional masses are distributed with a marked sense of the dramatic in which the static equilibrium is sometikes disturbed by some more violent gesture.

Two trends based on quite different conceptions manifested themselves in the architecture of the time. The first, emphasizing national tradition, is due to *Ion Mincu* (1852—1912), who grasped the real value of Romanian folk architecture and of monumental architecture during the Romanian Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The difficulty of working out a definite programme in which the model of ancient edifices should be taken over and adopted to multistoreyed modern urban edifices and office buildings or shops, led more often than not to a combination of traditional Romanian elements and elements belonging to Art 1900. Mincu transformed, aesthetically, the elements of a construction — pillars, columns, arches — interpreting the old forms of architecture without however simply resorting to an increased scale. He enriched the plastic language of Romanian architecture and of certain elements created by interpreting classical architecture.

His successors, *Grigore Cerchez* (1851—1927), *Cristofi Cerchez* (1872—1955), *Petre Antonescu* (1873—1965), *Niculaie Ghica-Budești* (1869—1943) realized an ample programme based on traditional sources.

The Romanian school of architecture belongs no doubt to the general European trend of Art 1900. Early in the same century, a new direction of recessionism is manifest in Transylvania, for the Hungarian architects were naturally seeking a "new-Hungarian" modern solution as regards style. Drawing on local sources more especially — ancient architecture and folklore — they often created original means of expression, typically Transylvanian, to which Hungarian elements were added so as to form a harmonious structure. The Sezession school in Transylvania went through two stylistic stages: the first, "curviliniar" and "ornamental", was influenced by architect Odon Lechner from Budapest, and lasted until about 1907; the second, "geometrical" is illustrated by the Transylvanian architect Karoly Kós and by Wigand Ede Thoroczkai who lived for many years in Tîrgu Mureș. Original features, typically Transylvanian, evincing the influence of peasant buildings, appear in many edifices built in keeping with the principles of Art 1900. Ferenc Merenyi, a historian of Transylvanian architecture, wrote: "The young generation of Sezession architects arduously study folk architecture in Transylvania and, after many unsuccessful attempts, they find an original solution."

This is obvious in the work of the representatives of the neo-Romanian style as well. It is quite certain that there existed *a Romanian school of art 1900* illustrated by ceramics, art metal-work, silverwork, book-binding and

graphic arts, by carpets and fabrics of every kind. Analyzing these works, art historians have come to the conclusion that Art 1900 in Romania does not belong to *Art Nouveau*, *Jugendstil*, *Modern Style* or *Sezession*, that it represents a typically national independent creation. "Yet its appearance could be neither atemporal nor extra-continental", wrote Paul Constantin, "it corresponded, naturally, to the diffusion of the conception of Art 1900 all over Europe."

The presence, in the painting of some artists who did not adhere to the stylistics of their movement, of elements typical of Art 1900 (some of Luchian's compositions are significant in this respect), proves how widely the ideas of the trend spread. Concomitantly, Grigorescu's painting continued to be a rich source of inspiration for a few painters who became in their turn models to be followed by future generations.

The message *Gheorghe Petrașcu* (1872—1949) conveys through his work is similar to a larger extent to the message of Luchian's art. The same as his contemporary, Petrașcu was to pass from Munich to the atelier of the neo-classical painter Bouguereau, whom he soon left, dissatisfied as he was with an anachronical art. There is no doubt that Grigorescu's conception and that of "*Tinerimea artistică*" (one of the founder members of which he was) echoed deep in the art of the young painter. However this influence manifested itself at the beginning of his career in the choice of subjects and the development of rustic themes.

Nevertheless, in the treatment of his themes he was, from the start, widely different from his contemporaries. His adherence to the ephemeral activity of ARTA, a society whose avowed aim was to organize "modern art" exhibitions, is more eloquent with him than with other artists of the time.

As early as the rural landscapes he painted around 1900, Petrașcu proved to be a first rate painter with a clearly defined personality. With him, white and black are not neuter tones, but colours integrated into the chromatic composition of a painting, rigorously enhancing it. The paste is dense, with a severe body, the planes of the landscape stand out separately, concentrating light in a few powerful patches of colour. The contours are clearly outlined, the chromatic registers are neatly separated, without any intermediate zone. More often than not Petrașcu introduces white screens in his landscapes, devoid of any vibration in their nude sometimes majestic simplicity, like in *Peasant House* which, perhaps, plays — in Romanian painting — the role played in French art by the L'Estaque landscapes created by Cézanne: a decisive aspiration towards the synthesis of form and colour. As far back as this period Petrașcu's aesthetic principles were opposed to impressionism which of all the European artistic movements was to find a deep response in the Romanian artistic atmosphere in the first half of the century. The artist did not seek sonorous orchestrations or the continuous vibration of luminous surfaces; he created instead ample harmonies, a powerful relief of the colouring.

About the same time, the artist was attracted by the Breton landscape which had attracted Grigorescu as well once; Petrașcu, however, painted mostly massive architectures, made up of powerful volumes, like blocks of colour. Not even later in the landscapes painted under the sun of the Adriatic, in Venice, did the light erode the contours; on the contrary, the structure with straight lines and clear rounded arches give an impression of solidity.

The wide arches are reflected with a mineral glitter in the river, dividing almost completely the surface of the painting, separating the light of the water from the light of the sky and throwing into relief the rugged stone structures. As a matter of fact all these landscapes, those painted in Spain included, are stony and arid; they are the exact opposite of romantic tradition and of decorative edulcoration, revealing a constant preocupation to capture the materiality of the world.

The Venetian landscapes express even more openly the anticonventional character of Petrașcu's work; he was never tempted by traditional interpretations (especially impressionist ones which turned the Venetian townscape into a pretext for the analysis of the always changing vibrations of the world on the water, on the coloured walls of the houses, in the clear air). In his vision, Venice is dramatically noble; it is the seat of the celebration of light created from loud tones, in tumultuous chromatic masses, from a surprising juxtaposition of dark red, metallic blue, greys and browns.

As to the still lifes, it was often said that they are influenced by the art of Cézanne who, concerned with construction, was able to make a great composition out of the humble objects of domestic life. As a matter of fact we must note that in the years previous to World War I Romanian painting had already assimilated — even through some pictures by Luchian — the technique of the master of Aix who used to construct a portrait by laying the paste in broad touches next to each other, suggesting the form by the harmony of chromatic vibrations. Reminiscences from Cézanne meet, significantly, reminiscences from Romanian art in apparently decorative details, in the form or enamel of a vase or in the decorative motif of a carpet. The same as Luchian, Petrașcu approaches folk art in a subtler manner; the process should be viewed mostly as a sthenic feeling of discovery of a world close to him, in its material hypostases. A black line encircles the objects as a rule, lending them telluric density.

Petrașcu painted with the minute dedication of the folk artisans. The support, the canvas, is covered with a dense ground over which the paste is laid meticulously with the knife. Professor George Oprescu, one of the main exegetes of his work, stressed the fact that the artist never used the technique of "broken tones" he preferred to create nuances by the superimposing of paste, by the reciprocal transparency of colours. These successive additions lent the paste of Petrașcu's paintings an almost sculptural structure; the rugosities of the paste influenced the light and shade effects like the accents of a relief. The objects have a crude material quality, the flowers have petals heavy with sap ... The artist tried to increase this impression by the pictorial paste itself. How animated the controversies regarding his art are is demonstrated by the fact that some exegetes compared it to the poetic simplicity of Chardin while others to the vigorous paste of Monticelli.

Halfway between the mineral and the organic, the world of his paintings calls up — in its grave concentrated poesy — a vision in which the palpable and the mysterious blend. This art comprises in its structure both the age-old Romanian art and the painting of the 20th century. It is a daring synthesis whose achievements point to one of the most significant moments in the history of Romanian art. Even if not the head of a school, Petrașcu is a founder of artistic tradition.

This is also the significance of the art of *Theodor Pallady* (1871—1956) who, the same as Petrașcu, discovered his vocation late enough. However

his studies at the Dresden Polytechnical School left their mark on his training: a rational exactness, relentless at times, was to govern the artistic creation of a painter who gave the following definition of tradition, significant both for his own work and for the work of all the prominent artists of Romanian painting: "Tradition means the long series of those who knew how and were able to go on to the end, to the point which others caught a faint glimpse of."

When in Paris, he worked in the studio of Puvis de Chavannes (whose wife and model was Maria Cantacuzino, a Romanian, the sister of Pallady's grandfather) and in the studio of Gustave Moreau. Like other pupils of Moreau at the time, Pallady did not adopt the aesthetic suggestions of the master, but, in the first place, he derived from his lessons his knowledge of the technique of drawing and of colour. His colleagues in Moreau's studio were Marquet, Rouault and Matisse. He befriended the last, and their friendship was to last for fifty years, until the French painter died. Their correspondence and Pallady's diary in which he calls up the figure of Matisse are documents recording a beautiful friendship. However, it is worth stating here that Pallady never adhered to the programme of the artistic movement whose orientation is due to the art of Matisse. The sources of his art are more complex, including the ancient mural paintings of North-Moldavian monuments and the aspiration towards a logical rigour, descending from Leonardo to reach modern art. In 1941, when Pallady had long asserted himself in Romanian painting, the artist noted in his conclusion to one of his letters to Matisse: "No, my dear friend, painting is not colour, as you say, just as an artist is not the man who lays colour on the canvas. You can paint with white and black but you must be also able to use these colours — not for the pleasure of painting but for the pleasure you feel when you have something (definite) to say about painting, which is *a World*. You must be able to express yourself."

Pallady subjected his entire art to his aspiration to a simple architecture, a linear logic of proportions, refusing grandiloquence, sentimentalism and picturesqueness. The simplifications of line and colour derive from the conception that, as Degas put it, "drawing is the manner in which we see form." A simplified, essentialized form, the result of a lengthy rational operation which does not accept sensuousness. The same law (supreme with Pallady) governs his palette which evokes the subdued tones of the Moldavian folk carpets.

The assertion of some exegetes proving that, in his art, the sources of poesy should be sought in ideas, not in instincts, is quite true; which, of course does not mean that Pallady's painting is limited to the expression of some concepts, reducing sensibility to the transcription of some refined orchestration of volumes and colours. His art is not external, it expresses an inward poesy one can trace in the concrete interplay of colours. The association of colours revealed an entire spiritual world, a world which tended to be exteriorized, because painting was "a sincere and merciless confession." This confesion is never converted into literature and the less so into something bookish; it is achieved with the specific means of painting, the metaphorical correspondences being embodied at last in forms and colours. Yet in forms and colours which, appearing from the world of reality, suggest the real and are never transformed into an expression beautiful *per se*.

It does not mean that, if the artist chose the still life as his principal means of confession, he limited himself to intimist themes. The few objects

placed in front of the easel signify a fragment of the universe, of its harmony and poesy. They do not lose their real meaning, they remain *objects*; yet they include, in their humble existence, something of the existence of great nature which can manifest itself only in concrete hypostases. With Pallady still life contains the values of an entire landscape; he often paints the broad vistas of nature, but, some times, we have the impression that the artist has deliberately given them up, for he can rediscover them concentrated as it were in a few corolas, in fruits and in leaves which joined symbolically the objects of everyday life.

It was noted that Pallady's painting was close to the vision of mural painting; the artist admitted that he was drawn to that vast monumental art which, we know, is meant to ennoble the edifices, to penetrate into the spiritual life of the city. Yet beyond this aknowledgement, the kinship between the Palladian and the vast mural painting covering the walls of the ancient monuments has one more sygnificance we must dwell on. Colour in Romanian mediaeval art did not play only a decorative role; André Grabar's remark that colour in Byzantine painting was meant to describe spiritual moods can be no doubt applied to North-Moldavian art as well which had sprung — with its own peculiar vigour — from the trunk of Byzantine art. The aesthetic function of colour, the tones designed to lend a sense of space and relief to the painted image, is a typical feature of ancient Romanian art. The desire to reveal the spirituality of the personages, divesting them of any physical substance, is also supported by special use of pure colours.

Pallady did not approach the sources of mediaeval art in order to reconstitute its line or colour as so many painters in the early half of the century purposed to do. He discovered the spiritual purport of ancient Romanian art, of its compositional equilibrium. The painter does not deny the materiality of the world surrounding him; his still lifes demonstrate his tendency to transform the real aspect of objects into a sort of poem in which the logical relations between things, between forms and colours is changed into a powerful lyrical motif. It is true that the contribution of Cézanne to the separation of colour from the reality of nature was instrumental in the formation of Pallady's conception, and that the ideas of the post-Cézanne epoch influenced the aesthetics of the Romanian painter; but it is also true that the reappraisal of the vision of ancient Romanian painting played an equally important role in his thinking. It may surprise one that the harmonious combinations of solar yellows and burning reds create an inefable, delicate atmosphere, springing from the extreme purification of the coloured forms which become essences. The volumes are clearly built, yet they merge at long last into a unique vibration of colour. Floating over his still lifes, landscapes and nudes, light does not leave on them patches of bright colour; on the contrary, it seems to caress their well defined surfaces, it hides as it were in the very structure of the volumes painted, radiating calmly, enveloping the entire composition in its uniform brilliance. It is light that makes the most common objects, the petals of a simple flower, express the idea of spirituality — the spirituality which, with Pallady, is included in every concrete material representation of this world.

The allusions to concrete reality are essentialized in a refined poesy, the same as the relations with Romanian sources. He was never attracted by the ethnographic notation or by folklore for the sake of folklore: it is common knowledge that the numerous variants of Matisse's painting *Blouse roumaine*

were completed only after the correspondence carried on by the two friends. Even when he sought inspiration in folk art, Pallady endeavoured to express its spirituality, to purify emotional moods, to transcend the ephemeral. His painting is the projection of poesy of permanencies; filtered through a lucid consciousness nature revealed its musical harmonies, the subtle rhythms of its contours and colours. It is the nature interpreted by a painter who always found the opportunity to confess himself through carefully arranged images; Pallady's pictures and drawings are as many spiritual self-portraits, testimonies of states of mind characteristic of a man who believed that "art is a long suffering, a question you keep asking of yourself." Or, as he put it in another page of his *Diary*, "nature unfolds before our eyes; it is our duty to solve the problem it poses to each of us, according to individual temperament."

The tradition of Romanian art was achieved by the contribution of the generation of Luchian, Petrașcu and Pallady, a triangle comprising inside its sides a vast territory of spirituality in which the specific national character and its universal significance merged.

The integration of modern art into a Romanian vision was promoted in the early decades of the century and in the period between the two World Wars, by an entire pleiad of artists whose aim was to discover the real world and the inward universe from a specific angle. Numerous artistic groups came into being during the period, their programme frequently asserting the necessity to define a national art in the context of the European artistic creation of the time. One of these groups, whose artistic orientation was consistently promoted by the articles, essays, and chronicles published by its founders was "The group of Four" including painters Francisc Șirato, N.N. Tonitza, Ștefan Dimitrescu and sculptor Oscar Han. In an article of 1919, Șirato presented a characteristic item of their programme: "It is a current axiom that a nation's art becomes part of the international cultural heritage when it is able to assert its own specific character."

The artistic creation of *Nicolae Tonitza* (1886—1940) illustrates this artistic creed; it incorporates echoes of Romanian ancient art (through Luchian sometimes) and also of the European art at the beginning of the 20th century. The young artist knew how to use his thorough knowledge of the drawing he had acquired at the Iași and Nubich academies and — adding to it what he had learnt from the study of Daummier — to lend it a lofty civic significance. He was one of the most active graphic artists of the time, publishing, in the democratic newspapers vehement plastic commentaries which were to set up a militant tradition in the inter-war Romanian art. An intellectual of true distinction, a precise, intuitive art critic, professor and political pamphleteer, Tonitza was one of the most prominent cultural personalities of the time.

His early works reveal his prevailing interest in social themes; the firm drawing and rough line reveal a narrative vision, a constant interest in drawing images easy to understand. The influence of expressionism (present in the works he produced during a later period) influenced the thematic orientation of certain drawing — very close to the themes of Masereel and Kaethe Kollwitz but resuming subjects of his own paintings as well. Highly dramatic compositions, stripped of any sentimentalism, evoke scenes from the war and from the years following it, with convoys of prisoners, old people and children waiting in long queues in winter, in front of bakeries.

Tonitza was convinced that in this world he could discover not only the tragical aspects of human life but also the perfect purity his art strived to

attain. The portraits of children, so typical of his painting, demonstrate the artists's strong desire to preserve his confidence in candour unaltered, in a world fraught with disappointments. They do not resume Poulbot's sentimentalism for instance, but express a peculiar poetic mysanthropy.

Certain portraits of children are placed in a décor of an intricate calligraphy, coloured arabesques which Tonitza was often to prefere especially during his last period of artistic creation. The decorative element marks his tendency to include the portrait in the precise rhythmical dance of ornaments, thus stressing its innocent gracefulness.

Paradoxically enough, sometimes one can discover reminiscences of Byzantine art in the female nude, and, unwittingly, one can imagine that, wearing long vestments, the woman would seem to step out from an old fresco.

However, a tragical feeling is smouldering in the art of Tonitza, often disturbing the calm of the portraits of children or nudes. The most obvious closeness to the expressionist vision is to be found in the cycle of portraits of clowns executed from 1924 to 1927. Tonitza's clowns do not possess the dramatic character of the masks executed by Kutter or Ensor; their tragedy is expressed directly in the puckered, contorted face which no mask conceals. This lends a much human dimension to a suffering Tonitza's personages clamour, halucinatingly at times, in the painter's own inward universe.

Towards the end of his artistic career, decorative orientation of Tonitzas' painting was to become external lacking the grave reverberation of the works he created from 1924 to 1936. Thus the creation of a great artist — marked by humanism and by his generation, violently contesting ugliness, social injustice, vulgarity — comes to an end. It is the creation comprizing the drama of a great artist, who aspired after an ideal he could never attain. His art while continuing the aesthetic creed of some of his forerunners (Luchian more especially), added to it some more definite features asserting a militant civic attitude.

The general tendencies of the art of *Francisc Şirato* (1877—1953) are, in a large measure, similar. The beginnings of the two friends — Tonitza and Şirato — were different in point of ideas, yet, all along their artistic career, they were both to come out in favour of the social function of art. Both gave a clear polemic sense to the drawings published in the papers. In an interview of 1945, Şirato admitted however that his pictorial vision descended from the art of Cézanne and from Romanian folk art. Bringing together two apparently very different orientations, Şirato emphasized a common trait of both, logical construction. Maybe he might have mentioned another source, expressionism, visible in his early paintings and especially in his engravings. It is true, however, that this trend did not suit his temperament, for his paintings, in his mature years, were to preserve only slight traces of the expressionist solutions he had favoured during his youth.

He travelled to Germany, where he worked in a lythography workshop — an important experience for the subsequent evolution of his vision as a draftsman — which took place before the setting up of the most representative expressionist groups. But the artistic atmosphere in the German towns heralded, no doubt the appearance of the movement. It is a fact that in some of his paintings representing clowns or describing fairs, painted in 1912, one can detect traces of expressionism, though not of the German one but of the Belgian painter Ensor. It is the same theme of the clown concealing under a grotesque smiling mask a world of harrowing sufferings. Yet the young paint-

er lacked the terrible vision of despair, the painful throb, the tendency to exacerbating the individual, Şirato clearly expressed his attitude to this trend: "We do not deplore or condemn the epoch of expressionism; we consider it a purgatory necessary to our sensibility, used up and dulled by the treadmill of daily life illustrated by the naturalists, sad and lacking any ideal." He was always a lyrical painter in the tradition of Romanian art, avoiding by nature any excess. A wave of tenderness envelops the painting of this lucid artist, of this great admirer of Luchian from whom he had inherited his passion for the translation of the life of the poor into line and colour.

Şirato was right when he admitted that Cézanne and the master painters of the Middle Ages were the sources of his art. He was one of those who, while adopting the spirit of Cézanne's painting, was able to discover the poesy of a space organized with geometric precision. The landscapes executed from 1924 to 1930 reveal the incorporation of Cézanne's vision: the entire scenery however, is bathed in light, which throws into relief the crude green of the trees, the white walls. Şirato does not build a linear perspective but a succession of coloured planes dividing the picture horizontally, light coming — more often than not — from the front.

However, it is in the paintings representing people that the synthesis between the influence of Cézanne and of Romanian folk art is more eloquent. The same sense deriving from a profession of faith confessing the painter's aspiration towards a means of expression able to lay stress on "the individual element included in the substance of the Romanian people" is to be found in the monumental figures of preasants; or as he put it once even more clearly, "art has a homeland as it is national by birth and universal in its effect." Eliminating "the amusing and the ornamental", striving to achieve "the synthetic concentration of the constitutive elements", Şirato realized specifically Romanian authentic works of art which, nevertheless, communicate with the values of world art.

The ornament of folk origin participates in the rigourous construction of colours peculiar to Şirato's painting whose very structure opposes decorativism. Rejecting the biased idea of the "joyful" chromatics of folk art, the painter created an ambience in which colour is equilibrated in sweeping modulations. The austere colouring, the harsh contours of forms make Şirato's personages look like statues. They come to us from legends, celebrating, in their lofty simplicity, the ancient rituals of daily life.

The study of figures and objects placed in the sun shine led the artist to conclusions unexpected for those who were familiar with his evolution until 1929—1930: an intimate atmosphere replaces the former monumental vision. Still lifes are now an opportunity to communicate a lyrical vibration. The glittering enamels on folk pottery, the white of a tablecloth, the loud yellow and red hues of some fruits make up calm harmonious combinations of colour. Petraşcu had lent his still lifes a mineral materiality, the nocturnal black hues enhanced the dense quality of objects; with Şirato too objects are heavy, but they retain a metallic brilliance, white becomes dense, volumes are pure.

At the time, Şirato conceived his still lifes almost bidimensionally, contours were often silhouetted against neuter backgrounds, designed to throw into relief — without any commentary — the geometry of the composition. Yet, as early as 1931, the paintings in which volumes were encircled by firm lines alternate with others in which the form is somewhat blurred and light vibrates dimly in the air enveloping the objects. Without adhering to the aesthetics of impressionism, the painter felt more and more inclined towards

construction through light. However, he never gave up his belief in the ability of painting to reveal essences, rejecting the formula of "the plastic instantaneousness". "The artist, "he said, "detaches the constant elements of volume and form from the changing play of light." His painting never aims at breaking up form into coloured radiations; with him light gathers round volumes, enveloping them in a material vapour, with irridescences of a fragile beauty. His flowers came to express quite powerfully a spiritual self-portrait (the way only Luchian's dramatic corollas had done in Romanian art).

He travelled slowly the road leading to the achievement of a synthesis between light and colour, yet he all the time anxiously contemplated the real universe which was to help him discover the principle of "art in conformity with nature."

Ştefan Dimitrescu (1886—1933), the other painter belonging to "The Group of Four", created an art based on a temperament quite different from the impetuous one of his friends. A meditative nature, of great spiritual delicacy, the painter is a man of noble discretion and deep humanism. To his mind, the specific national character meant a permanent interest in themes inspired by the life of the peasants and of the workers, as well as the assimilation of stylizations typical of Romanian folk art.

He discovered in the simple drawing of the folk artist, to which he added elements of the early Italian Renaissance frescoes, the virtues of the syntheses of planes and volumes to represent complex realities which he investigated with keen interest. It is significant that during his studies in Paris he was briefly attracted by the impressionist vision; soon after, he turned to Cézanne whose work enabled him to render real life in forms closer to his own temperament. To this early experience was added, in 1914—1916, the contact with Byzantine painting. This period of assimilation of the lesson of great art was soon interrupted by the war; the same as with Tonitza, the reality of war left its dramatic imprint on Ştefan Dimitrescu's work, a dramatism deriving from life in the trenches and at the rear of the front. He recorded every event in deeply tragical scenes, far removed from the grandiloquent narrative style of battle pieces.

His composition *The Dead of Caşin*, painted in 1917, was destroyed in 1938 in a fire but the two sketches he had made help us understand the feeling that governed the creation of the work. In the dim light of a tragical dusk, under a canopy made of folk carpets, lie three victims of a bombardment. The bodies, slightly foreshortened, their arms crossed on their breast, the silhouette of the mourners standing close to them in an attitude of tragic prostration, lend the composition a rigorous rhythm. The mourners, like an ancient chours, are dressed in white peasant blouses, like white spots of colour, emphasizing the tragedy of sudden violent death. The rhythm of the intersecting planes suggests the austere, rather angular simplicity of a wooden folk sculpture. In the background, beyond massive hills made up of a dark agglomeration of volumes, rises a sky executed in somewhat broader brush strokes, a sky in which small spots of blood-red colour seem to glitter threateningly. The unity between the tragical sense of the subjects and the manner in which they are rendered through volume and colour, was one of the main concerns of the painter. The turmoil in a man's soul is not expressed, however, through agitated forms and violent colours; its depth is unveiled by a grave, sorrowful commentary.

Little by little, towards the end of the third decade of the century, the vision of Ştefan Dimitrescu became more pictorial: without giving up the

organizing virtues of the line which lends his images a sober monumentality, the artist resorted more and more frequently to an ampler palette. The same as Şirato, he integrates the decorative folk element in a well balanced composition, created with a great respect for the original chromatic functions.

The colour scheme in the paintings depicting peasant life is quite simple: dark browns, a few touches of red or blue together with their complementaries. The painter defined his conception of the function of colour as follows: "Colour contains in itself both light and shade, form and modelling." "Now", — he wrote in the years when his art relied more firmly on the virtues of a broad chromatics, "I turn my attention to colour, without relinquishing form."

The work of *Camil Ressu* (1880—1962) falls within the compass of humanism, a fundamental direction of Romanian art. Relying on the expressive force of the line, the artist investigated the same world of humble people repositories of great moral values. Like many other artists of his generation Ressu drew resolutely nearer to socialist ideas, which lent civic value to many paintings created all along his artistic career. A social militant, participating — with his incisive drawings and paintings — in contemporary events, Ressu made of his work the chronicle of an epoch of deep social unrest.

He studied at the Schools of Fine Arts in Bucharest, Iaşi and Munich, then in Paris at the Julian Academy and in the studio of Jean Paul Laurens. His contact with the French socialists, in the capital of France, made his political ideas even more resolute; his vehement satirical drawing published in the democratic magazines after that he came back home are ample proof of his deep social convictions. An impetous civic activity, all along half a century, made of Camil Ressu one of the prominent figures of Romanian art and public life. A founder of "Arta Românească" (a society whose statute included among other items the necessity to "examine and analyse the sources of Romanian national art"), Ressu believed that artistic creation is an act of participation in contemporary events.

The artist's predilection for peasant themes demonstrates both his lucid confidence in the human values of this simple world and the polemic character of his opposition to the edulcorated image created by Grigorescu's epigones.

His painting lays stress on a realistic art. It reveals in the first place the authentic character of events and personages. The peasants, mostly represented in groups, become genuine collective portraits, strong figures standing out against the horizon, while colour separates the planes sharply, each inside a closed form it sets off vigorously. Thus, the images convey the robust feeling of a lasting material world in a form plastic *pur excellence*.

His art, solemn, never exuberant, is a Mediterranean art, its clarity deriving from a classical vision. That is why the analogy with the themes of paintings by artists living at the end of the 19th century is valid only for the basic elements of Ressu's art. The comparison with Courbet's painting is justified because the artistic principles of the Romanian painter were expressed, among others, in a ample composition whose subject is similar to *The Burial at Ornans*. However, *The Burial in the Countryside* exudes the solemnity of an age-old ritual, simple and severe. The portraits of the peasants who attend the funeral convey a contained sorrow concentrated in the energetically drawn features. The powerful rhythm of the volumes organizes this scene in which a few large patches of white enhance the dramatic feeling suggested by the dark chromatics of the composition.

It is true that in the landscapes Ressu created one can detect echoes of Derain's art, of the landscapes filled with an inward tension; but it is also true that the Romanian artist always endeavours to paint nature in its true colours. The dramatic character of his painting originates in the dramatism of the vast plains, scorched by the hot summer sun, under a sky traversed by threatening clouds; plains cut across by a road on which one can spy the lonely shadow of an ox-drawn cart which seems to enhance the feeling of devastation dominating the entire landscape.

The portraits Ressu made are based on the same solid construction of planes and volumes. His simple means of plastic expression lend the portraits a natural air: despite the logical precision of the planes on whose composition he always worked for a long time, Ressu creates the impression of great spontaneity in the posture of his models (particularly when they are adolescents or children). Later on, after 1944, his art was to acquire new spiritual valences — characteristic of the painter who discovered new aspects of the beauty and grandeur of human nature.

There are, in this respect, many points of contact between the art of Ressu and *Iosif Iser* (1881—1958). Their début was marked by the influence of the socialist ideas — illustrated by the drawings published in the democratic magazines of the the time — and both of them devoted a long period of their creative activity to themes treating of the life of the humble people. A stage in the evolution of both is also marked by their belief in the organizing virtues of drawing which they opposed to the pulverization of form, cultivated by the followers of impressionism. Yet Iser's career goes through several distinct stages and his paintings clearly mirror the concordance between his artistic vision and certain innovating trends of world art.

The painter extracted the essential elements from the impressions produced by his journeying through his own country, Spain, France and the Near East, and incorporated them into a solid architecture of volumes, rendering space in broad lines and creating an original chromatic atmosphere. In the years following World War I he laid the foundations of an art which rejected any biased programme and endeavoured to establish a harmonious link between his means of expression, his own moods and the subject treated. Angular forms alternate with an undulating line, powerfully delineated contours with barely suggested ones, all this in order to express the attitude of the artist to the world of the humble, of peasants, workers and simple artisans.

At the time, he was to discover the dramatic characters of the rural environment: the peasants are drawn in sharp lines and an austere palette consisting mostly of browns. The synthesis of planes leads to a monumental image, symbolizing the permanence of this world so admirable in its dignity. He depicted the life of the Tartars and Turks in Dobrudja, devoid of any exoticism or picturesqueness. In 1920 Tonitza wrote: "Iser sees in the landscape a fragment from the fantastic universal turmoil. That is why there is always a grave note in his landscapes even when the delicate motif would have required an interpretation which, with other painters, could easily become edulcorated." Iser is for Tonitza, "a realist painter... with a pre-eminently modern vision." His landscapes are sometimes of a geological austerity, laid waste by a scorching sun; the earth seems to have turned to ashes; the puny houses sink under the burden of the sky burnt as it were by the light.

The second period of Iser's painting starting around 1920, is characterized by a sort of indifference to the subject, by a freer use of a palette which becomes more vivid, more exuberant. Images acquire an intense brilliance achiev-

ed through voluptuous, sensuous harmonies dominated by red, yellow and violet. Colour, which had so far been the material of the architectural construction, participating in the dramatic separation of planes and volumes, becomes vibration and tumult, suggesting the immaterial soaring of light. Forms are no longer separated by means of sharp lines, characteristic of the painter's earlier period of creation; they are modelled through different tonal values and become warmly undulating. This does not mean, however, that the artist gave up the means of expression peculiar to composition: Iser's art creates an equilibrium of the coloured forms which become organized in ample, fluid geometries. The painter is faithful to a principle he stated in an interview held in 1923: "Colour is deeply embedded in the soul, it is a dramatic confrontation between the painter and the outer world."

With less precise artistic means *Octav Băncilă* (1872—1944) belongs to the same direction of Romanian painting which — through Ressu, Iser and Tonitza — expressed a lucid and pathetic social protest. All through an important period of artistic creation, his paintings reflected the artistic conception according to which art must participate directly in debating the great problems of the time; hence the overwhelming feeling of revolt underlying his paintings representing scenes from the great peasant uprisings of 1907 and the repression following them. The paintings inspired by those tragical events were removed, by order of the authorities, from the exhibition where they were first on show; as a matter of fact, Băncilă was long suspected on account of his connections with the socialist circles; that is why it was very late that he was appointed professor at the School of Fine Arts.

However the painter did not give up a theme he considered his civic duty to treat of and completed a cycle of six paintings often quoted and reproduced by the democratic press of the time as an example of militant artistic consciousness. A world of humble, oppressed people, peasants represented with deep compassion by so many painters and graphic artists before Băncilă, whole generations of wronged people, are present in these allegorical compositions. Sentimental in the paintings inspired by the life of the humble artisans in the suburbs of the Moldavian towns — executed with a thick paste and with a calm lighting, in the spirit of the Munich academism — or by the life of the orphans (resembling some illustrations for Dickens's stories), Băncilă was to make concessions — towards the end of his life — to the petty bourgeois taste; no longer interested in the complex problems of art, he tackled mawkish picturesque themes.

The evolution of *Alexandru Phoebus* (1898—1954) is different in this respect. From his youth, he too asserted himself as a painter of social themes: while he studied at the Fine Arts School he also had on show a few portraits of workers; a little later he turned his attention to the world of the suburbs which he stripped of any picturesque element. Significantly enough, his presence in the Paris ateliers was to bring him nearer to the forms of Gromaire; he learnt from the French artist the aspiration to a massive construction, to the equilibrium of volumes and values, as also the subdued colouring devoid of any brilliance. It was said before that the colour scheme in his paintings comprises two basic combinations: green-yellow-brown and blue-grey-black. Black was "the most sonorous tone" even in the period when he favoured rustic themes; it threw forms into relief and created an ample rhythm of surfaces. The compostions representing portraits of workers have a monumental, imposing appearance, but are devoid of any rhetorical element: as a rule the

figures are silhouetted against a background representing landscapes treated as vigorous geometrical constructivist stylizations.

The townscapes — suburbs with crooked, sloping streets and dilapidated houses — have a metallic sheen; they seem to be the setting of a drama, resembling some expressionist landscapes. Under a threatening sky, tinged with loud blue and grey tones, Phoebus' landscapes convey a grave tension; sometimes, however, the saturated tones, laid in energetic brush-strokes, suggest the latent qualities of a colourist.

The themes inspired by the workers' life had an energetic interpreter in the Transylvanian painter *Aurel Pop* (1879—1960). Tonitza considered him to be "not a simple painter — which would displease and hurt him —, but an active propagandist of Marxism." His determined adhesion to the movement of the proletariat and the themes of most of his paintings will be a permanent document of his political beliefs. Towards the end of his life he declared: "My paintings do not aim to produce unusual effects; they have general-human and deeply social implications... Everyone realizes now that my art is militant. Yes, that is my opinion too: politically engaged art." This conception, stated so clearly and convincingly, lies at the foundation of an art in which political themes are interpreted by a tumultuous temperament.

Aurel Pop is an eclectic who assimilated the impressionist notation, the neoclassical rigorous execution, the decorative unity of *Sezessionstil*, the expressionist exacerbation of form. Those who noticed the composite character of his art also stressed "the functional reorganization of these formal experiences whose sense and aims the artist interpreted anew so as to conform to the need for aesthetic chrystalization of the ideas whose prophet he felt he was."

Lascăr Vorel (1879—1918) was a well defined artistic personality who participated in the renewal of European art during the early decades of the 20th century. His attachment to social themes is not sentimental, a mere compassion for the humble; it is different from the Munich school which adapted the subjects to preestablished compositional patterns. Vorel, who lived for a long time in Munich, rejected the academist formulas, highly appreciated in the capital of Bavaria, and adopted certain artistic means of expression deriving from the recent experience of German expressionism. It is true that he did not directly participate in the confrontations of ideas in the artistic life of his contemporary Germany; but his vision was not alien to the intellectual atmosphere of the time. Commentaries on his work have shown how clearly Vorel opted for "Cézanne's constructivism, modulating it and using it as an ossature of his expressionism."

His temperament is particularly obvious in his vehement satire, based on the grotesque exaggeration of the portrait. This "methodical uglification" recalls, no doubt, the art of Georg Grosz; but the German artist adopted this violent caricatural vision only after 1918, the year when Vorel died, which demonstrates the latter's originality.

The Romanian artist favoured the gouache, creating clashing harmonies of blue, violet and grey, with a few touches of dull, earthen white. Perspective changes all the time, enhancing the psychological ambience in which his personages move; the internal, geometrical construction of the composition is emphasized by intersecting lines and surfaces which enable the artist to subtly characterize his personages. One can detect in his work significant

political allegories similar, in a way, to the remote "danses macabres" in Gothic art.

Nevertheless, we should mention the complete change of Vorel's vision in the paintings depicting people and places in Romania. The peasants living on the banks of the Bistrița, in Moldavia, where the artist was born, spend this life in an ambience of great poesy, a landscape with wide horizons bathed in a soft sunshine. The figures are of a pleasing monumentality, emphasized by their clean white clothes. Like many other expressionists, Vorel was turning nostalgically to the invigorating image of the village.

Impressionists and Impressionisms

Of all the various currents of modern European art it was impressionism which had a wider echo in Romanian painting. Its lirical values corresponded, no doubt, to the temperamental inclinations of the Romanian artists; this goes to explain the assimilation of impressionist elements not only by Grigorescu's painting for instance — representing nature with forests and hills bathed in light — but also the presence of impressionist elements in the work of Aman, who from the stylistic viewpoint obviously evinced academist inclinations. In Romanian painting there was no group to adhere programatically to the impressionist aesthetics; yet separate impressionist elements can be detected in the work of many artists. And, although many important Romanian painters declared they were opposed to a vision which tended to record only the fleeting movement of light and to ignore permanence and depth, impressionism gained ground, each time however displaying some different characteristics. The term *impressionism* when used to designate the orientations of some representatives of colourism in Romania, is no play upon words. This because, in many cases, the impressionist principles are reintegrated in many a personal way, each laying stress on one of the features of the original models; in other cases unexpected stylistic syntheses are created or, frequently enough, the adoption of impressionist elements is the consequence of temperamental affinities and has little to do with the theoretical programme of the movement.

The painting of *Jean Al. Steriadi* (1880—1956), for instance, is not entirely influenced by the impressionist aesthetics; he had, above all, a careful, observant eye endeavouring to discover the aspects of the real external world, without subordinating it to any pre-established theory. One might say that the presence in his art of impressionist methods has a peculiar significance; it is the painter's encounter with means of expression suited to his own artistic programme, which was to re-assess the significances of daily occurrences, their simple poesy, concentrated in a few details, in the attitude of some personages, in the fragments of some luxuriantly lighted townscapes.

An impressionist vision became clear, with Steriadi, only late after he finished his studies in Paris; at first, the influences of the great impressionists are obvious only in a few, not always essential, aspects of the young Romanian painter. His début could rather be connected with the artistic creation of Lucien Simon (who had influenced Ressu as well); the rigorous construction

of the volumes, the distribution of colour in paintings where the chiaroscuro is dominant show that the art of the French painter was far removed from the impressionist techniques. Nevertheless, even in his early works Steriadi tried to reconstitute the atmosphere of sunlit landscapes, the transparency of colours laid in large patches. There is sometimes in such paintings a certain nostalgic contemplation of some patriarchal spots of the town suburbs.

Steriadi was a genuine poet of the landscape he celebrated with his solar, exuberant palette. Towards the end of the 1920s, forms and colours in his landscapes merge, bathed in a bluish light in which shadows disperse and become transparent. Even the monumental industrial buildings suggested calm light effects spreading far into the distance on the gentle undulating hills. His views of harbours do not capture the restless, tremulous light on the water; on the contrary, they communicate a calm which seems to be filling the entire space, uniting sky and water. Contours are never agitated; they are traced in broad, undulating curves, in a calm, all-embracing movement. There is in such paintings a classicist poesy rather, trying to reveal the permanent elements of this world and to envelop them in a warm, quiet light.

The fact that, as was noted, the coordinates of *Nicolae Dărăscu's* art (1883—1959) point to a vision unlike that of Steriadi, does not imply his adhesion to a different artistic movement. It is true that with Dărăscu too colour was the main element, that at the beginning of his career and under the influence of Cézanne, colour built the perspective and its successive planes. At that time, Dărăscu already associated Seurat's pointillism to the technique of Cézanne, achieving a powerful lyrical synthesis. Later on, he was to adopt the fauvist technique as well, laying the main colours side by side — another means, in fact, of confession by exalting the chromatic regime of the painting. The adoption of all these varied suggestions did not lead to eclecticism: they were incorporated into an art whose specific character was due to a painter so fond of light, the creator of a world peopled by personages called "creatures living with the sun."

The artist recorded the fleeting moments of a stable, permanent nature, of certain vegetal and geologic structures of the land, the water and the air. Stone and leaves are not mere pretexts designed to render some effect; they remain stone and leaves and the light falling on them does not pulverize them.

Sometimes, especially in the landscapes painted in Romania the artist builds up the images in broad brushstrokes, modulating transitions and concentrating light in a few intense chromatic centres. Later however, in the paintings representing views of Paris or landscapes from Provence, he used to replace the symphonic harmonies by a vivid play of brilliant accords. Critics laid stress on Dărăscu's ability to create an atmosphere, to capture the tonal values of light at different moments in the course of one day, the misty atmosphere of townscapes in the rain, the bustle of streets.

As is known, impressionism discovered the poesy of the railway stations drowned in the smoke of locomotives intensely coloured by light. In the spirit of symbolist poetry — Belgian more especially which celebrated the modern city — the impressionists discovered the colours of townscapes. Dărăscu did the same and executed a very significant painting, not only for the evolution of his own vision but for the entire Romanian art of the time. *Calea Vic-*

toriei in the Rain (1918) does not depict — as Steriadi's paintings do — the patriarchal views of Bucharest; the artist represents the bustle of a main street, buildings hardly visible in the uncertain shadow of the rainy twilight. The palette consists mostly of black, blue and brown hues, without for that matter diminishing the chromatic impression.

Nevertheless it is a fact that Dărăscu was above all the painter of sunny images; the luminous vibration acquired a surprising materiality, emphasizing volumes, making them more palpable as it were. Even in the paintings in which light trembles restlessly on the surface of the water the image is not fragmented, the broad rhythmical touches of colour lending it density. The seascape offered most of the impressionists an opportunity to record the ephemeral sparkling of light. Dărăscu saw in it an evidence of the permanence of light: that is why his seascapes drowned in light possess a calm gravity.

The adhesion to impressionism of *Lucian Grigorescu* (1894 — 1965) too is due to temperamental affinities. He could have approved of the following statement Dărăscu made once: "In art, creation is first of all an achievement of *man* and only then can it be considered an achievement of the *artist*." His paintings testify to his "Rabelaisian" appetite for colour; yet often enough, this overflow of sap is toned down by the great delicacy of tones. The forests in leaf covering the hills, the fruits, the grass — all of them suggesting the triumphant plenitude of the organic world — seem to absorb light and radiate it anew rather than to be enveloped in it. However, these reverberations do not intersect chaotically for the artist is fond of the hidden equilibrium peculiar to nature. That is why one can distinguish in his paintings a rhythm of the colour-objects, a rhythm which, no matter how energetic, does not do violate to nature.

Reality was respected, yet transfigured by the painter's acute sensibility. The contours of this world are eroded as it were by the sunshine, they lose their telluric density, become light and transparent. However, these images are not too exuberant; on the contrary, they allow one to catch a glimpse of a tense poetic sensitivity. The artist had no inclination for dramatic representations, so the dominant impression is given by the warm colouring. His spontaneous brushwork reminds one of the delicate subtleness of a poem which rejects grandiloquence. Even if light is rendered by vivid notations, it never becomes a pretext for a decorative play of colours. With this gentle, expressive painter, light is a character, in fact the main character of a work instinct with lyrical meanings.

In point of temperament, *Aurel Ciupe* (1900—1988) is different in equal measure from both Steriadi and Lucian Grigorescu, although the impressionistic inflections of his painting bring him obviously closer to the two older masters. His familiarity with museum pieces combines with a native propensity for meditation. Ciupe is one of the artists who, during the interwar period, were devoted to civic militant ideals expressed in articles and engravings published in newspapers, the latter containing echoes of the expressionist graphic art in the early decades of the century. His name, together with the names of other artists from Transylvania, like Catul Bogdan or Ion Vlasiu, deserves to be mentioned whenever the contribution of the Transylvanian intelligentzia to the affirmation of democratic ideas is under examination. The source of inspiration of his linographs and xylographs was a world fraught with deep social contradictions; at the same time however his engravings and paintings dealt with more lyrical and intimate subjects. The land-

scapes produced during the fertile period extending from 1938 to 1939 tend to comprise in one single synthesis of colours the suggestion of André Lhote's style as well as those of impressionism. The result is a painting breathing a calm and silent collectedness in front of nature.

All along his prodigious career Aurel Ciupe was a moderate impressionist as the landscapes from Banat showed him to be until the 1920s. Light in those landscapes preserved the outlines of objects, enveloped them in a unitary atmosphere, without modifying the volumes. The artist seems to be interested in the notation of a general background, of permanent elements and not in the rendering of the vibrations of colour captured in a particular moment of the day.

An art of spontaneity, watercolour was represented by several important Romanian artists. Even if some of them considered it to be an exercise preceding the painting proper, or a brief notation of a theme they were subsequently to develop in ampler representations, they nevertheless used it to record certain impressions, freed from any stylistic restrictions. *M. W. Arnold* (1897 — 1946) was a prominent artist, one of those who chose watercolour as his principal means of expression.

His watercolours make up a genuine travel journal, with subtle, delicate notations which describe briefly the atmosphere of the places he visited. Arnold was endowed with the superior gift of rendering space: coloured planes do not follow in a rigid, geometrical succession, but merge in reverberations of light. Through the transparent air the horizon is dimly visible. In the subtle transitions of light the fragile silhouettes of trees or of masts delineate the places and reveal the depth of space. In his vivid use of colours Arnold does not show any concern with increasing his chromatic gamut; he resorts to a few dominant tones — blue, green, yellow and pink — around which he harmonizes the entire structure of the image.

Arnold's paintings are equally spontaneous; one can easily perceive in them the inclination for watercolour of an artist whose favourite subjects were the air and light changed into colour.

Gustav Kollar (1878—1965), a native of Brașov, adopted the technique of the watercolour able "to transcribe the effects of permanently changing light"; he therefore believed that artistic expression is closer to the demands formulated once by the impressionists. However, his watercolours are the result of a long meditation on the permanence of forms in nature. Light does not unify contours but sets off their variety, their wide rhythmical integration into coloured structures.

In the painting of many Romanian painters who were attracted by impressionism or deliberately adhered to the aesthetics of the movement, in fact one can distinguish echoes of post-impressionism as well. They do not resume the theoretical principles of Seurat, but participate only in the effusion of colour present in some of their paintings. The same as the fauvist elements, the post-impressionist echoes are integrated into a pictorial vision whose principal aim is to express the poesy pervading the Protean world of colour. The only important artist who consistently adhered to pointillism was *Samuel Mützner* (1884—1959).

His début was influenced by Monet (whose pupil Mützner was). Soon after, he was to turn to pointillism and executed paintings imbued with a jovial feeling for nature. The landscapes he painted in Romania, on the shores of the Mediterranean, in Greece and Italy, in North America, France, Japan or South America bear the stamp of an artistic temperament bent on discovering the fairylike play of light suffusing the atmosphere.

The work of his wife, *Rodica Maniu* (1890—1958) too is influenced by post-impressionist painting. With her, the poesy of colourism is more intimate, her delicate feelings generating, it is true, images of great clarity and chromatic brilliance, which however originate in a reality restricted to her immediate surrounding milieu. She too was attracted by the effects of light filtered through verdures, by the sunny skies of the summer afternoons; and she was able to suggest the material character, dense and brilliant, of nature.

The same tendency of incorporating colour into a solid construction of planes carefully arranged in a well balanced succession can be detected in the painting of *Dimitrie Berea* (1913—1975). In the images he created during the inter-war period he boldly selected chromatic impressions reorganizing them so as to form coherent structures.

There are artists in whose works the impressionist influence was grafted on a support made up of various stylistic tendencies, different at times from the theoretical principles of Monet or Manet. With *Elena Popeea* (1885—1941) for instance, the impressionist interplay of light combines with certain constructivist tendencies adopted from the lessons of André Lhote, with whom she studied in Paris. She started, as some critics have noticed, from the traditional values of Transylvanian painting; she concentrated on colour effects reflected on volumes and on large surfaces thus creating a rigorous rhythm of forms arranged in coloured spaces.

With *Nutzi Acontz* (1894—1957) impressionism means a keen visual sensibility, a subtle colouring, a certain liberty of rhythms; however these qualities are made the support of an elegant line tending to the decorative integration of objects into space.

Aurel Băieșu (1897—1928) died too young to achieve his potential. The beginnings of his career demonstrate how powerful the influence of Grigorescu still was, even after World War I. Băieșu approached both the themes of Grigorescu's paintings and the interpretations of a literary character of the master's epigones. His works dealing with rustic subjects are steeped in a sentimentalism easily accounted for by the seductive power of the model and the natural hesitating beginnings of a young artist.

What is valuable indeed in his work is the original transcription of the themes to which he consistently devoted himself. He was intent on grouping the personages in ample scenes, suggesting the bustle of streets, the milling crowds at the fairs. More often than not he could do it by agglomerating the volumes in the foreground, making them close the perspective or concentrate it around the silhouettes of his personages.

A tragical fate put an end to the artistic career of *Bob Bulgaru* (1907—1938) at a moment when the artistic personality of the young painter had hardly begun to take shape. The artist was highly responsive to various styles; in 1937, for instance, he was attracted by impressionism as well as by the firm construction of the masses of colour. His portraits of children — some of the most characteristic works of the young artist — have a fascinating gravity, a peculiar graceful wisdom; they reject facile sentimentalism, superficial gentleness, frivolousness.

The painting of *Hrandt Avakian* (b. 1900) and *Dan Băjenaru* (b. 1900) stands half way between impressionism and post-impressionism. The former experienced the contained joy of discovering light whereby contours are set off and coloured surfaces are organized; light unifies the construction and makes the air enveloping it vibrate. Băjenaru has a contemplative temperament: his painting illustrates his adoption of post-impressionism in the sense

of expressing the visual sensation by the discreet rhythms of the coloured surfaces.

Adam Bălțatu (1898—1985) too can hardly be integrated with any stylistic category of modern art. The portraits he painted in the 1920s show his interest in tonal values, his ability to suggest the psychological make-up of a character by concentrating in his features (in the eyes more especially) a great inward energy. He was later to begin painting landscape, eager to discover the functions of light — transparent and light — which throws into relief the characteristic features of the volumes, incorporating them into ample rhythms of colour.

With *Catul Bogdan* (1897—1978), a delicate, subtle painter, the violence of the polemic voice in some of his drawings and engravings published in the democratic papers of the 1930s may appear surprising indeed. The artist was interested in the great social problems of the time; there is an interesting relationship between his graphic art in the 1930s and his later paintings characterized by a refined impressionism: they are complementary. Opposed to any jarring note, to grandiloquence and prosaism, he realized that the humblest motifs can become poetic subjects. A limited number of colours, able to render the specific character of a landscape, to emphasize the permanent elements in the structure of objects, a dreamy atmosphere are the main traits of Catul Bogdan's painting.

Impressionism is one of the components of the stylistic synthesis achieved by *Ion Musceleanu* (b. 1903); it combines with elements of post-impressionist art and, in some compositions with flowers, with reminiscences of the fauvist chromatics. Highly characteristic, however, is his effort to suggest the envelope of coloured mist around the bodies. His arbitrary chromatics originates in his subtle conception of the function of the dominant colour, which the artist pulverizes and spreads over the entire surface of the painting; in this he displays his great skill in alternating complementary colours and related tones, whence the impression of unity peculiar to these happy, jovial images.

The painting of *Alexandru Szolnay* (1893—1950) offers an original solution for the assimilation of impressionism. Starting from Cézanne, the artist travelled the road of modern painting in the opposite direction, he rediscovered the organizing function of colour, its ability to interprete light effects. Szolnay's brushwork is exuberant and rhythmical, the planes of the perspective are firmly delineated. We can see in his painting the joy of the painter to discover broad horizons and describe miniature subjects.

With *Micaela Eleutheriade* (1900—1979) the lapidary colourism she had learnt from Marquet and the imaginative calligraphy acquired from Dufy overlap; the artist combines them into an original synthesis all her own, adding sometimes an impressionist notation and, particularly, a captivating naïve narrative which marks the original character of her painting. The artist is endowed with the power of transforming the visual energy of an object into an emotional energy.

The same belief in the virtues creative of beauty of reality is typical of *Ștefan Constantinescu* (1898—1983). He was active both in easel painting and in monumental art. In his small-sized paintings the vibration of the colou-

ring, subordinated to a rigorous composition, penetrates into the play of light and shade, revealing the specific character of a plastic motif, its poetic thrill.

The untimely death of *Tasso Marchini* (1907—1936) put an end to his artistic career. A calm rhythm of forms characterizes his work in which, however, energy pulsates, an energy revealed by clearly delineated curves, by the angles suggesting the geometrical structure of the entire painting. The painter's vision was closse to the construction of the Florentine Renaissance to which he added elements of the specific chromatics of the Romanian medieval frescoes. The iridiscences in his still lifes do not blur the contours or pulverize the compositional ensemble.

The impressionist beginnings of *Sabin Popp* (1895—1928) are significant only in as far as they contribute to the assertion of a specific type of sensibility, receptive to the subtle grasping of chromatic harmonies. The source of his vision, however, should be sought in other areas of art history; moreover — as art historian Ion Frunzetti pointed out — the artist is the first Romanian painter who consistently endeavoured to eliminate the problems the post-impressionists were interested in and to replace them by a vision of essences. His studies in Rome helped him get into direct touch with the logical rigour of the Italian Renaissance painting of the quatrocento. His affinities with the Romanian ancient art and its Byzantine substance helped him discover in it the same expressive stylization of the line and of chromatic rhythms. The graphical decorativism mentioned in connection with his art does not betray any inclination to mannerism: the painter wanted to express the order of things in the world of the real, by means of a solid architecture and a precise drawing. Without changing his pictures into mere quotations from the painting of the mediaeval masters, he took over from them a few traits such as the powerful rendering of volumes, of the variations of flat colours.

In fact, towards the end of the 1920s, the problems pertaining to the assertion of the specific national character became ever more topical. In fine arts, they were formulated especially in the polemic discussions of "The Group of Four" putting forward both the separation from the traditions of Romanian art and the strict adoption and copy of Nicolae Grigorescu's art with its reduced adherence to the contemporary epoch. Though from quite different angles, the magazines "Viața Românească" and "Gîndirea" militated for the creation of works inspired by Romanian realities. The polemic dispute in which scholars whose interests were widely different — philosophers, sociologists, artists, architects — continued all through the next decade.

The problem of the national specific character, approached from different angles, were to hold an important place whenever the idea was debated during the inter-war period.

Art and the Specific National Character

Many artists of the period described facts and people belonging to Romanian reality; even when these images were integrated into a rather picturesque vision, they contributed to the creation of a specific fund of all the arts. Among those concerned with defining the painting dealing with national subjects, *Ion Theodorescu-Sion* (1882—1939) must also be mentioned for

his successful achievements in this respect as well as for the exterior-decorative elements he added to his themes. His art, based on a rhytmical organization of volumes, taken over from constructivism, evinced his inclination for a solid structuration of objects. He created some easel paintings for which the wider space of murals would have been necessary. Allegory, as treated by Theodorescu-Sion, brings into his paintings certain elements borrowed from the monumental compositions of Puvis de Chavannes which he adds to a decorative treatment resembling folk art ornaments.

Interpreted from a different angle, the rustic picturesque element is predominant in most of the compositions by *Ștefan Popescu* (1877—1948). The vision of the artist is rather idyllic, in the tradition of the "Semănătorist" trend. In the beginning, Ștefan Popescu's painting evinced his interest in graver themes, inspired by the dramatic life of the peasants: this happened about the year 1907, the year of the great peasant uprisings, when those tragical events made a deep impression on the painter, an intellectual hailing from the village himself who, in his youth had adopted socialist ideas. His most representative works were landscapes executed after World War I. With Ștefan Popescu nature is monumental in the classical sense of the word. His studies of trees are ample and grave, recalling Andreescu and the painters of Barbizon, without however possessing their dramatic quality.

The art practised at the beginning of the century put a decisive stamp on the painting of *Rudolf Schweitzer-Cumpăna* (1886—1975). His studies at the Art Academy in Berlin, at a time when Max Lieberman's impressionism was in great favour among the young German artists, influenced the work of Schweitzer-Cumpăna. All through his activity, the painter was faithful to a characteristic technique: a rich paste laid in superposed layers in which the chromatic effects are produced by powerful contrasting lighting effects. Images are rather harsh, austere, modelled with an obvious concern to suggest the sculptural character of surfaces and volumes. Sometimes the construction is overloaded, its materiality preventing the expression of a genuine power of characterization.

However, the artist was able to reveal the force of some landscapes powerfully lighted by the sun, or the force of the fields scorched by the burning sun, over which falls the heavy shadow of some tree. At other times reminiscences from Cézanne are clearly visible. His peasants have a stern, austere appearance. In his best portraits these human beings he painted in such a manner as to avoid any idyllic reflexes exude a warm humaneness.

The relationship between folk art and the painting of *Dumitru Ghiață* (1888—1972) is a perfect illustration of the manner in which the artist grasped the very meaning of folk creations; his vision springs in fact from the very essence of this creation conveying its robust feeling and austere noble expression. The painter discovered the lasting values of Romanian folklore which can increase the lyrical pathos of the pictorial image.

Ghiață incorporated the post-impressionist vision he had made his own during his studies in Paris into his own personal artistic conception. For a long time the landscapes of North Oltenia where the artist was born — not far from Brâncuși's native place — were the favourite theme of the artist. The rural world was part and parcel of his spiritual make-up; there was a deep communion between himself, the peasants and the Oltenian landscape. He was able to render the specific colouring of those places and to capture the movement in the inner world of people.

In his landscapes, the post-impressionistic masses of colour are supported by a strictly stylized line, making up a powerfully articulated "armature" of the entire composition. The monumentality of the portraits results organically from the fact that he understands the moral univers of his models who are never mere picturesque characters of some conventional story. Ghiață turns to the sources of folk creations; his images represent — the same as in folklore — a subtle interpretation of the visible world. The artist achieves it with an admirable simplicity. His still lifes have the same significance: they are fragments of nature itself, they are beautiful in their simplicity. His portraits of peasants are genuine effigies of a generous, austere humanity: no one perhaps of the great Romanian artists was able to capture so veridically the psychology of the peasant.

The integration of folk art into a vision peculiar of folk art assumes different forms with *Ion Țuculescu* (1910—1962). His paintings are ardent confession of a restless temperament, striving to grasp the most profound essences of human existence. He made a very early début (his first one-man exhibition was opened when he was only fifteen); then, for ten years, he studied biology and medicine and was the authour of works highly appreciated by specialists. In fact, not even after 1934, when he resumed painting, did he give up his scientific activities.

He used, in a rapid evolution, various stylistic means of expression whose main characteristic was always the desire to express a stirring world of emotions. The paintings executed during the early years of his career can hardly suggest the halucinating emotional intensity his art was to attain during his last period of artistic creation. A common trait — besides the temperament of the painter—unites the images he created: it is his belief in the philosophical values of Romanian folk art. His early works tend to capture what might be termed *the objective character* of the folk ornaments: in the peasant interiors he frequently represented during this period, the treatment of the decorative detail reveals the painter's deep understanding of the expressive function of colour and of the graphical rhythm.

The distribution of colour in powerfully contrasting small surfaces reveals his preference for the post-impressionist methods. Very soon, however, he was to adopt ampler, more energetic rhythms, recalling expressionist painting. Țuculescu never made an idol of any manner of painting, which to him, was always a means of expression not an aim of art. Some landscapes painted during this period bring together in the same image echoes of quite varied directions — not always related — of modern art. However, they blend into a powerfully dramatic, unique expression. The landscapes from Italy, Greece, and the Romanian shores of the Black Sea are dominated by skies of a glaring light which throws into a strong relief the contours of volumes and the deep planes of perspective. The earth is a strongly emphasized presence, whose dramatic character is enhanced by the sun. The stretches of land become concentrated in dense colours: loud blue or violet tones, warm tones of red and yellow.

With *Imre Nagy* (1893—1976) the interpretation of country life scenes is authentic and jovial, although he does not reach a folklore vision. The artist started from a monumental vision in which the chromatic relations were clearly defined; the chronicle of the Transylvanian village began with dramatic portraits of peasants (suggesting certain analogies with the vision of Ghiață) rendered in an attitude of grave, pensive concentration. This was

a period which was to leave deep traces in the work of Nagy, not necessarily in his understanding of forms but more especially in the construction of a composition, in the dynamic relations between the zones of contrasting colours.

His commentators have demonstrated that the significance of Nagy's art cannot be grasped outside the atmosphere of Jigodin, the village which was his main source of inspiration. He did not create the monograph of *a village* but of *the Transylvanian village* in general. Sometimes the landscapes acquire an unexpected transparency, a delicate vibration, although the artist does not give up a rigorous composition. However, a robust humour and a sense of the miniature remain the characteristic traits of his painting.

It is very difficult to find a place for *Magdalena Rădulescu* (1900—1986) in the complex artistic climate between the two World Wars and after. Her drawing, of a fascinating simplicity, marks the precise limits of forms, lending them a hieratic expression resembling the portraits of Etruscan art. But she also introduced a peculiar chromatic rhythm, dominant tones of browns and pale red, which remind one of the noble colouring of Romanian pottery. Her portraits of peasant women are syntheses of directions descending from age-old traditions of European art conveyed by modern means of expression. They were moreover drawn with a minuteness typical of both the Italian Pre-Rafaelite Renaissance and of the Romanian mediaeval frescoes, which made the synthesis even more comprehensive.

The painting of *Lucia Demetriade-Bălăcescu* (1895—1979) calls up a jovial world. Chromatic purity is in fact the reflexion of the charming candour with which the painter rendered the aspects of the world. The vivid patches of colour of the objects stand out against a dark background, which enhances their brilliance. Her landscapes, flowers or small genre scenes organized in charming decorative rhythms, eliminate tonal transitions or values, the subjects becoming pretexts for the development of a powerful, sonorous colouring, graceful at the same time. An always fresh sense of observation, a spontaneous notation of colours lend a personal note to Lucia Demetriade-Bălăcescu's painting which asserts its philosophical significance without any ostentation.

Without adhering to any definite style or current of modern art, *Margareta Sterian* (b. 1897) combined in her own personal vision elements of post-impressionism, constructivism and fauvism. A highly cultivated artist, a genuine poetess who has translated works by great poets, Margareta Sterian viewed painting as one more means of recording — the same as verse — the lyrical effusions of an intellectual contemplation of the world. The emotional participation of the artist in her landscapes is powerfully expressed through colour. The scenes inspired by the life of the village do not record ethographic details but a spiritual atmosphere captured in lapidary terms, without any attempt at the narrative.

Obviously, it is not possible to establish a strict correspondence between the themes illustrating the national specific character (in the sense — as one can see — at the time of the development of a rustic motif or of a folklore one) and the styles expressing it in painting. It is true that by a complex process influenced by the ideas promoted by some traditionalist magazines, there occurred a paradoxical encounter of the various programmes meant to reassess the significances of rural civilization with the expressionist aesthetics. However, as expressionism in Romania, like in other European

countries as well, poses problems difficult to solve, we consider it meet and proper to discuss it separately.

Surprisingly enough, a long period of time was necessary for Brâncuși's work to rouse an echo in an art founded on the traditions of an age-old rural civilization. This happened especially in an epoch when artists and theoreticians of culture alike demonstrated what fruitful sources of inspiration the ideas and structures of folk art were, and when the Romanian painting and sculpture rediscovered the significances of peasant themes, and when understanding Brâncuși's message would have guided them towards the deepest layers of Romanian archaic art. It is true that, in the 1920s and especially in the following decade, studies by Romanian historians and philosophers of culture were devoted to Brâncuși's artistic creation, emphasizing the originality of a vision so closely related to folk art. Yet even the Romanian sculptors who worked for a time in Brâncuși's atelier — and, among them, sculptors animated by modern ideas indeed — did not achieve a synthesis similar to the master's in an epoch when his work commanded the attention of Europe.

Milița Petrașcu (1892—1975) for instance, an avantgarde Romanian artist, made a fountain inspired by the ballad of *Miorița* (The Ewe Lamb) which contains the essence of the ancestral Romanian thinking, in a cosmic vision, expressing the total integration of man with nature. The bas-relief decorating the fountain represents the poetic substance of the ballad in a splendid and well-balanced narrative sequence.

Mac Constantinescu (1900—1979), who studied under Brâncuși too, favoured an art of classical equilibrium. An artist possessing a comprehensive humanist culture, the first to have founded — as early as 1930 — classes of design in Romanian artistic education, he had a Mediterranean temperament deeply influenced by ancient Greek and Renaissance arts.

However, it was Paciurea who exerted a deeper and more fruitful influence on Romanian art between the two World Wars (and even later). This is but natural if we consider his pedagogical activity and the modern vision of his *Chimeras* more especially.

Ion Jalea (1887—1982) studied at the School of Fine Arts in Bucharest, under Paciurea; he adopted his master's severe pathos, to which he added the experience acquired in Paris, in the studio of Bourdelle, and the subtle modelling he had discovered in the sculpture of Despiau. This synthesis made it possible for the artist to express an ample movement inspired by ancient mythology. In other works belonging to the same period, the severe harmony of the construction does not arrest the élan of the movement, and brings him nearer to the classical Greek sculpture. The experience of the war, in which he lost his left arm, helped him better understand the great human suffering which he expressed with a never emphatic pathos. His statuettes clearly show his gift in capturing the moments of a tragically tense epic narrative. Drawing closer to contemporary life, Jalea created a few works inspired by peasant themes; they are authentic and safe from the "Semănătorist" picturesque, so frequent in the sculpture of the time.

His portraits are the embodiment of the same aspiration towards equilibrium, trying to represent the permanent elements of a man's psychology. In his commentary on the sculptor's art, critic Octavian Barbosa noted that, with Jalea, "the resemblance with the real model is not a facility offered by realism, but the « test track », the "ordeal by fire" of its resistance. It is as if he were permanently afraid his work was not in touch with reality,

a fact he wants to avoid at any cost by stressing deliberately the representative virtues of the image." A general characteristic of his sculpture is its lack of ostentation, its discretion which still does not shrink from adopting the existing forms of reality. He always chose his subjects from the human reality surrounding him. The heroes of his portraits are common people; when carving the portrait of some outstanding personality of cultural life he is interested in his psychology.

A similar tendency towards a classical equilibrium, to a monumental architecture of volumes characterizes the work of *Oscar Han* (1891—1976), a prestigious personality of Romanian sculpture and art criticism. He too studied with Paciurea and wrote a monograph on his master, the first critical study on the great sculptor. The monuments he created retain a severe majesty in their simple aspect.

Cornel Medrea (1889—1964), a Transylvanian by birth, had not studied under Paciurea; however, after 1915 when he setted down in Bucharest after he graduated from the Budapest High School of Decorative Arts, he participated in the exhibitions of various groups of artists who appreciated the ideas of the man who had created *The Giant*. One of the works which convincingly demonstrate the influence of Paciurea is a monumental bust representing *Barbu Delavrancea*, laying stress on his romantic impetuous temperament, a characteristic feature of the great writer. The years he spent at the front during World War I were a dramatic experience transcribed in works of deep humanism, with a powerful monumental tension, though small enough in size.

His style too tended to a plastic balance of volumes, to a robust serenity. A remarkable portraitist, Medrea combined psychological expression and a sure sense of monumentality whereby the plastic image becomes imposing and full of élan. In his old age, he was able to build up a more complex plastic vision more akin to his impetuous character, yet of an ample balance. Elements from Paciurea and Maillol merge in his own work.

The syntax of the figurative, interpreted in different ways by the representative sculptors of the 1920s and 1930s, is the main feature of the art of volumes during that period and in the decades following close upon the war. Han, Medrea, Mac Constantinescu were professors at the Bucharest Fine Arts Institute so that they exerted a direct influence on the younger generations.

Gheorghe D. Anghel (1904—1966) holds a place apart among the sculptors who, though not professors themselves, exerted an equally great influence on their successors. He reinterpreted the tradition of Romanian art in a highly original manner, combining the spirit and the form of mediaeval art in a manner different from that of Paciurea's sculpture yet stemming obviously from the same sources. Anghel was a master of modelling which with him became vibrantly poetic. The originality of his work is the more significant as it was shaped by a traditional vision of the figurative. In his work the classical rigour of the architecture of forms meets with the romantic spiritual unrest, with the Byzantine tradition of the spiritualized portrait and with the entire significance of man's relationship with the world. The cardinal virtue of his work was the artist's deeply humble attitude to art viewed as an expression of the meanings of the universe, together with a firm belief in the power of the artist to capture the ultimate sense of the material to be carved, to force it to submit to its supreme task i.e. to become the specific form of expression of truth in the world. That is why his portraits

and compositions seem to reveal archetypal significances, initial moments of an evolution of man, without for that matter conducing to simplifications stemming from the morphology of primitive art.

The pupil of both Paciurea and Brâncuși, *Romulus Ladea* (1901—1970) was not influenced by the vision of either. It is not absolutely necessary that — in a country with a very old tradition of wood sculpture — Ladea should have been influenced by Brâncuși's art when, for a long period of time, he gave his attention to this technique. It was rightly said that the Romanian artist was halfway between the pictorial quality of Rodin and the architectural rigour of Bourdelle. Sometimes the two directions meet in one and the same work, the smooth surfaces caressed as it were by light alternating with uneven portions in which light and shade create powerful effects, emphasizing the lyrical significance of the portrait. The portraits of peasant women with their gentle countenance, are candid in their musing attitude: Ladea was no doubt, one of the Romanian sculptors who had a deep insight into the psychology of a world which has preserved the traditional values of an entire people.

When he made his début in 1928 at the "Salonul Oficial", *Ion Irimescu* (b. 1903) compelled recognition by his vision which brought together themes of the traditional Romanian mediaeval art and others he had taken over from the legends of the ancient classics. The formula was based on the solid architecture of volumes and the plastic quality of surfaces, in a dynamic interpretation which certain critics were to consider a variant of the Baroque forms. Irimescu is one of the Romanian sculptors who, after 1944, was to adopt stylistic solutions which hardly recalled his beginnings.

More faithful to his masters at the Fine Arts School (he studied with Han whom he held in great respect all his life) *Boris Caragea* (1906—1981) descended from classicism and he never considered it necessary to modify its fundamental elements. His romantic temperament often led to pathetic gestures and even to an agitated construction of planes characteristic of a sensibility and power of expression consistently subordinated to the classical ideal the sculptor had adopted in his youth.

A less strict classicism is prevalent in the work of *Iosif Fekete* (1903—1979) who made a name for himself owing to his *Monument of the Airmen* in Bucharest, in which the sculpture proper and the pedestal unite to form a highly expressive structure. In the monument honouring *Horia, Cloșca and Crișan*, the heroes of the great uprising of the Transilvanian bondsmen in the 18th century, the theme is modelled amply recalling the cubist reduction of forms.

Jenö Szervatius (1901—1982) was more closely related to the traditions of folk art in his interpretation of forms. This is partly due to wood, his favourite material; he skilfully made use of the plastic virtues of the fibres, of knots and stumps to create structures full of energy in which folklore elements — narrative and formal — become integrated.

The characteristic feature of Romanian art with its predilection for the traditions of folk art, is the aspiration towards grasping its spiritual meanings never content to adopt only a sculptural or decorative morphology no matter how original its interpretation.

Expressionist and Fauvist Polymorphism

Like in the case of other modern artistic movements, the appearance of Romanian expressionism and fauvism was not due to some programme worked out by a clearly constituted group. Moreover, artists and works belonging to these currents are seldom characterized through references to the theoretical theses of the founders: form is the result of a temperamental adhesion, not necessarily of the adoption of some principles. The traditions of expressionism in Romanian art were mentioned as far back as the first decade of the 20th century and coincide with certain tendencies opposed to the modern forms of art — which is less surprising than it would seem at first sight. However, as the opposition was polemical to urban civilization and exalted rustic life with its essential moral values, the phenomenon can be easily understood.

A decisive factor in the creation of an expressionist style was the development of a political graphic art, i.e. drawings published in newspapers. The genre attracted ever more strongly the artists of a generation grown mature during the years of violent social upheavals which reached a climax in the peasant uprisings of 1907. For a long time they were to leave an indelible mark on the conscience of the Romanian intelligentzia. During the interwar period, the militant civic ideals were often expressed by expressionist illustrations and drawings.

Painting in this period evinced an obvious interest in the dramatic aspects of rural life; yet its prevailing model continued to be the 19th century realism. Even the paintings rejecting the edulcoration of the peasant theme, lacked the pathetic combination of tragical and grotesque elements, the grievous deformation of the line, and the almost unbearable exaltation of colour, the halucinating atmosphere of expressionist painting.

Reproductions of expressionist European graphics were published in the democratic neswpapers, models for the Romanian draftsmen and engravers who discovered in them their own ideas opposed to militarism, capitalism and fascism. One of the most typical examples of artists who asserted themselves in those years of violent confrontations is *Vasile Kazar* (b. 1913). He made his very early début in the pages of left-wing magazines, interpreting scenes from the life of peasants in Maramureș (a region situated in the north of Transylvania) with which he was quite familiar and which he described in a style devoid of any picturesque element. The tragical character of the scenes was enhanced by subtle deformations, halucinating elongations, agglomerations of complicated forms, figures drawn in sharp lines, within an optic space reinterpreted through an unexpected discontinuity of perspective.

There is no tendency to any deformation in the portraits of peasants; they are tense, not contorted like the expressionist portraits. His most representative work of the period is an album *Polenta Bread*, published in 1937. The label of *expressionism* was applied to it on the grounds of certain thematic analogies rather than because of an analysis of his style. The young artist had the ability to reduce the painting to the essential elements, to simplify the line, he could build a composition by a broad rhytmical arrangement of the drawing and of the white surfaces.

Hans Mattis-Teutsch (1886—1960) came from a different direction: he was the only important artist in Romania who started directly from the theses of Kandinsky and of the other painters who had founded the *Blaue Reiter*

group. Initially he adhered to the artistic movement styled "integralism" (from the title of the "Integral" magazine, one of the most representative Romanian avant-garde publications). He belonged to the Paris editorial staff of this Bucharest review which, in its first issue, condemned individualism, demanding the integration of the artist into society. "No to individuals who like archangels fly high above society; caught in its mechanism, we live in it and for it." His adhesion to integralism coincided with the completion of the cycle *Spiritual Flowers*, created between 1919 and 1924, which illustrates Kandinsky's theory of the rhythmical agreement of concave and convex forms and of the contribution of colour to this construction. He drew near to the metaphorical direction of expressionism, to what was styled "musical expressionism."

He made his début at "Herbst Salon" organized by *Der Sturm* in Budapest, in 1913. Three years later he joined *Ma*, the famous Budapestan group of left-wing intellectuals under whose auspices he opened his first one-man exhibition, in 1917, and published his first volume of linocuts. In 1921, in summer, he was present at an exhibition together with Archipenko and Klee and later in the same year, with Chagall. The prestige he gained is confirmed by the presence of one of his linocuts in the anthology published in 1954 in memory of Walden, where his name is mentioned alongside Archipenko, Marc, Léger, Chagall, Arp, Kokoschka, Moholy-Nagy, Klee, Kandinsky, Otto Nagel.

His expressionist period did not last long; in 1929, constructivism reached a climax in the artistic creation of Mattis-Teutsch. He exhibited with the *KUT* Budapest group and with the Bucharest artists belonging to the *Arta Nouă* (New Art) group consisting of cubists and expressionists. Critics gave quite a favourable appreciation of his work attesting the qualities of an art which, faithful to the specific spirituality of this country, freely and boldly communicated with European art. However, at that very moment the artist evolved in the direction of another vision and another pattern of forms. His expressionist experience had come to an end leaving its traces in his entire creation as well as in his artistic theory and in the art of some of his disciples.

Although there were few artists to comply with the aesthetic principles of expressionism to the end, there still existed echoes of the themes and style of this current at some moment or other of the evolution of certain painters and graphic artists in Romania. There are critics who correctly pointed out the temperamental disagreement between most of the representatives of the Romanian school of art (characterized in the first place by a tendency to balance and harmony) and expressionism, particularly with its tendency to exalt the fears and despair of the lonesome individual in his encounters with a tragical world, which had lost its balance. The only group in which one can detect a few constant expressionist elements is the so-called Free School of Painting of Baia Mare.

The thorough study Raoul Şerban devoted to this group offers precise data concerning its style and aesthetic ideology. In this town situated in the north of Transylvania there existed, between 1896 and 1902 a painting colony headed by Simion Hollósy who, in summer-time, came and worked here with the pupils of his own school of painting in Munich. After 1902, the traditions of Holósy's colony were resumed by the "Free School of Painting", an institution with an obvious international character whose prestige drew painters from several European countries. Until 1907 (when it broke

up), the Baia Mare School played an important part in promoting an art of a high professional level and consistent democratic attitude.

The group opposed academism, naturalism and impressionism alike. Alexandru Ziffer (who was one of the most outstanding representatives of the school) called this attitude "neomodern". The Baia Mare School did not profess an absolute orientation towards expressionism; the styles practised by its members included composite elements, secessionist and even impressionist, besides others, more recent, which were cubist, fauvist and expressionist. Ziffer was a promoter of the stylistic synthesis; Aurel Popp too — despite his sporadic connections with the Baia Mare School — contributed to the intensification of the forms of social protest, making art polemize vehemently with contemporary realities. *Alexandru Ziffer* (1880—1962) was twenty-six when he exhibited at the "Salon des Indépendants" in Paris a composition eulogized by Matisse. He assimilated elements from various currents whereby he wanted to reveal the dramatic character of nature. He depicted a feverish spiritual world, landscapes with halucinatingly contorted trees, light reflected by the metallic white colour of the walls, all of them enveloped in an atmosphere characteristic of expressionism in which, however, man preserves his grave nobleness. The artist relied on some conclusions of cubism as well: his landscapes and portraits are often built on a strong armature of planes and volumes; the rational character of his plastic architecture is enhanced by the distribution of colour in dense, compact patches, in a discontinuous yet perfectly logical rhythm.

As far back as the first years after World War I, several art circles were set up in Transylvania — at Oradea, Lugoj, Timișoara — in which the influences of the painting of Central and North Europe meet others coming from beyond the Carpathians, mostly from Bucharest.

Still, the most important artistic centre of Transylvania was Cluj, where a State School of Fine Arts was founded in 1925, after the example of those in Bucharest and Iași. The same year, an ample exhibition was organized, entitled "Collegium Artificum Transylvanicorum", whose catalogue in Romanian, Hungarian and German was prefaced by the Romanian poet Emil Isac, a fervent promoter of the understanding between the various nationalities in Transylvania. In 1920 he had written the following: "There is no atavistic enmity in art and the painters of Romania, regardless of their origin, will be able to find a common ground for the progress of this country's artistic level."

Unfortunately, the climate of cooperation and emulation was seriously endangered after the Vienna Diktat which, in 1940, severed Northern Transylvania from the rest of the Romanian territory; the pressure exerted by Hitler's and Mussolini's governments left Romania defenceless and introduced the repression of Romanian culture on the occupied territory. But even after this act artistic manifestations did not cease altogether; in 1942, for instance, painters Petru Abrudan, Emil Cornea, Teodor Harșia and Raoul Șorban, together with several men of letters and musicians, set up the "Association of the Romanian Artists in Northern Transylvania". In 1942 and 1943, the Association organized important exhibitions demonstrating the firm belief that art can survive under the most unfavourable conditions.

The militant character of Transylvanian art assumed the form of a humanitarianism proclaiming the equality of all people irrespective of their

nationality. In point of style one can intuit a preference for expressionism; yet it is not the only means of expressing the themes with a marked social character of the epoch. One of the painters who adhered unreservedly to expressionism was *Istvan Nagy* (1874—1937) who dealt with sombre subjects (abandoned, derelict churchyards, for example) in violent colours which suggest the influence of Van Gogh; his expressionist vision is the more significant as the artist uses the technique of the pastel which, as a rule, with other artists, implies a lyrical attitude and a fresh colouring. *Iulius Podlipny* (1898—1986) lived in a world haunted by maleficient forces; the art historian Vasile Florea writes that "the social protest without losing its vehemence, practically turns into a real sermon about fraternization". His themes, reminiscent of Brueghel, recall scenes from the life of the oppressed whom the artist regarded with sympathy and understanding.

Certain expressionist touches can be distinguished in the painting of other Transylvanian artists as well. *Coriolan Munteanu* (b. 1909), *Dinu Iliu* (b. 1910), *Raoul Șorban* (b. 1912). In the painting of the latter — a distinguished intellectual with a comprehensive understanding of the problems of culture — the affinity with Rouault's vision is quite obvious. One of the last representatives of the Baia Mare School, *Eugen Pascu* (1895—1948), painter and sculptor, adopted an expressionist-constructivist formula.

Of all the artists north of the Carpathians, *Leon Alex* (1907—1944) was the most characteristically expressionist in his syntax. He was a former pupil of Podlipny, from whom he took over his themes and the humanitarian substance of his protest. In fact, expressionism with him was not so much embodied in a violent chromatics or a tense line as in the choice of subjects. The form, reduced with sham naivety to a few lines, the colouring consisting only of two or three basic tones, were subordinated to the narrative. Brutal moments of a terrible social reality were recorded by means of a violent plastic language: the gouaches executed during the war — tragical scenes of concentration camps and repression—are the most pathetic artistic documents of the time.

With *Hans Hermann* (1885—1980) expressionism was not generated by a temperamental inclination towards discovering a maleficent world; it was rather the echo of a protest against the pulverisation of forms practised by impressionism and pointillism. The artist sought refuge from the industrial town, from the world of tragical contrasts; yet, unlike other artists who adopted the expressionists' ideas, in Hermann's opinion not even the village was a world of peace and quiet. The earth was a forbidding reality to his mind, the peasants having to fight its pitiless uncontrolled elements. Thus Hans Hermann's expressionism borders on literary naturalism.

Fauvism in Romanian art was not a school based on a programme but, like other modern movements, it manifested itself as a temperamental inclination. In the art of Dărăscu or Țuculescu, fauvist elements were short-lived; other artists of the period, however, followed consistently the directions of fauvists. *Vasile Popescu* (1891—1944) was the most outstanding of them. During the years of his studies in Paris, he was influenced by the current; he was attracted especially by the decorative precision of Dufy's drawing and by the abrupt definition of the masses of colour. His fresh, vivid palette is due to the clear-cut separation of the chromatic registers and the powerful harmonies of colour; the construction is never ostentatious but subordinated to the lyrical feelings of the painter who fervently admires the aspects of the world. Even when the pictorial matter has the density of incandescent

lava, one can detect the intentions that guided him in the organization of the colours, in characterizing volumes through colour. The critic Eugen Schileru wrote that "his entire painting is structured like a poem", a poem in which planes are rhythmical, colours rhyme in a subtle way and all of them proclaim the materiality of nature in a style which is never neuter or amorphous.

Petre Iorgulescu-Yor (1890—1939) practised a moderate fauvism; his painting often incorporated post-impressionist elements, obvious in the division of tones and in the subtly laid brushstrokes. It is an intimist painting even in the images inspired by the southern landscapes and their glittering light. An unequal artist, Iorgulescu-Yor asserted himself in the first place by an almost perfect technique, verging on virtuosity; when this technique sprang from a genuine feeling, his creations attained an undisputable expressiveness.

Trude Schullerus (1889—1981) was attracted by fauvism and the pictorial solutions she discovered in Van Gogh's landscapes. They helped her discover methods apt to suggest the energy smouldering in the forms of nature, exploding in loud colours. Her paintings however, are built according to rigorous patterns, to a geometry wich separates the planes; the artist endeavoured to lend balance to the various registers of the clear architecture of her painting. The result is a heterogeneous combination of fauvist chromatics with traditional drawings and themes, as well as a sometimes strange imagery.

The absence of a rigorous programme of fauvism made some artists draw nearer to this current; although they did not share its ideas, their temperament urged them to represent striking images of reality by means of a powerful colour scheme. This goes to explain the fauvist reflexes in the work of painters who adhered to currents with a somewhat similar vision but also to others — impressionism, post-impressionism and even variants of realism — hardly related to the programme of fauvism.

The Avant-garde

The Romanian artistic avant-garde was a complex, often contradictory phenomenon. Bringing together, sometimes in the pages of the same magazine, the contributions of poets and plastic artists belonging to various trends, the avant-garde movement asserted itself at first as a protest — expressed in various ways and more or less vehemently — against obsolete aesthetic formulas and reactionary social forces. The manifesto of "Contimporanul" the first magazine to promote the ideas of the literary and artistic modernism (published between 1922 and 1932), reads as follows: "When the invading finance... after having stolen surreptitiously the political power by the noctural strangling of the people's will is preparing to taint Romanian thinking as well, it is necessary, imperatively necessary that at least the thinking of the younger generation should break the heavy Promethean fetters and soar towards the blue heights."

Writers whose prestige was already established, but especially some of the most important representatives of the younger generation — Ion Vinea, Geo Bogza, Miron Radu Paraschivescu, Ilarie Voronca, B. Fundoianu (who after emigrating to France was known under the pen name of Benjamin Fontane), Stephan Roll, Gellu Naum — contributed to magazines in which their protesting creed was published. They militated for an antiphilistine, antibourgeois and, later on, antifascist art. However the avant-garde had not the structure of a unitary movement within which the very numerous artistic trends could be delimited in some way. Its beginnings were to be found in the ephemeral activity of magazines edited by very young writers and artists who, in fact, founded a small avant-garde group.

In 1912 they published a literary magazine *The Symbol*, then *The Call*, the latter being more substantial and aggressive. The two magazines were founded by Ion Vinea and Tristan Tzara.

In this restless, exciting climate, a new kind of prose made its appearance in Bucharest, a prose foreshadowing dadaism, whose author signed under the pseudonym Urmuz. "In any case," wrote Eugène Ionesco," Urmuz is indeed one of the precursors of the world literary revolt, one of the prophets of the dislocation of social forms, thinking and language."

It is not at all surprising to realize that Tristan Tzara and Marcel Iancu, two young men who had made their début in the nonconforming avant-garde circles in Bucharest, belonged to the group which started the dadaist rebellion in Zurich.

Iconoclastic declarations abound in the magazines of the younger generation, which does not mean that the avant-garde groups were to adopt, of necessity, negativist attitudes in all the domains of artistic creation. An excerpt from the programme of "Contimporanul" is quite illustrative in this respect: "WE WANT: fine arts free from sentimentalism, from literature and anecdote, an expression of forms and pure colours in relation with themselves." We must therefore stress the fact that the paintings and drawings by certain artists belonging to these trends — such as *M. H. Maxy* (1895—1971), *Corneliu Michăilescu* (1887—1965), *Marcel Iancu* (1896 — 1981) (whose name is spelt *Janco* in the West), or *Jules Perahim* (b. 1914) — are pervaded by a deep humanitarian élan.

The lack of a clear-cut distinction between the currents participating in the foundation of the Romanian avant-garde has made it necessary to establish as a reference point for the discussion of this movement (with all its hesitations and its aesthetic and ideological assets) the contributions of some artists to the literary magazines, their participation in group exhibitions (organized sometimes in the editorial offices of the respective magazines, where writers too had works on show). Considering that they broke with tradition, those artists (who belonged to different currents—expressionist, cubist, constructivist, surrealist) proclaimed Brâncuși and the poet Arghezi models of modernity, without always detecting their complex and profound ties with the ancient sources of Romanian culture.

Despite the undeniable importance of the modern work of Brâncuși, Urmuz, Vinea, Tzara and of other forerunners, the Romanian avant-garde emerged as a movement only early in the 1920s , the culminating point of its activities being — in the opinion of many a critic — the year 1924 when the vehement *Activist Manifesto to the Youth* was published and when an international exhibition was organized in Bucharest in which, besides Romanian artists (Brâncuși, Janco, Maxy, Mattis-Teutsch, Victor Brauner) par-

ticipated some foreign artists like Paul Klee, Hans Arp, Kurt Schwitters and others.

Another extremely active magazine of the Romanian avant-garde, with editorial offices in Bucharest and Paris, was "Integral" published between 1925 and 1928 to promote constructivist art in which Maxy saw "the extreme left of cubism". A similar though more radical programme was promoted by another magazine "*75 H.P.*" edited by Victor Brauner, Stephan Roll, and Ilarie Voronca. Worth mentioning from among the other numerous magazines of the avant-garde are "Punct" (1924—1925) and "Unu" (1928—1931), the latter consistently defending the positions of surrealism.

Possessing too little unity to resist the polemics opposing them to traditionalist groups, the avant-garde circles — consisting of enthusiastic people but having no definite programmes — came into being and broke up quickly enough. It is difficult to establish both the lines uniting them and those distinguishing them from others. "Our Group", "Our Art", "The Plastic Group", "Criterion" were only names signaling their diversity; they were no landmarks in a history of art in the 1920s and 1930s, because they disappeared too soon and because the ideas of their promoters were too wide apart to suggest a firm aesthetic or philosophic orientation.

Mattis Teutsch was one of the artists who, without adhering to the styles of the inter-war avant-garde, was a promoter of the renewing movements of the period. Neither did *Maxy* practise an art of extremist stylistics when he contributed to the avant-garde magazines. He started from the rationalist vision of a cubism reminiscent of Braque's manner of painting, in which the volumes are represented in their spatial development without any fragmentation into arbitrary geometrical forms. Maxy dealt with social themes related to those characteristic of a long period of Léger's art. Sometimes, with bitter irony he introduces in his paintings an ostentatious conventional setting, a grave, dark chromatics, rejecting any sentimentalist picturesqueness.

Around the years 1936—1937, his colour scheme became more refined, less austere, suggesting a more consistently sentimental attitude of the artist. *St. George's Square on Crutches*, a painting heralding this period, looks like a deliberately scenographic setting with derelict houses propped with tall beams whose discontinuous rhythm together with the rhythm of the sloping roofs creates an independent geometry which needs no intervention from the outside. The colouring is less sombre, surfaces are clearly delineated, while the dominant colours, blue and grey, enhance the dramatism of the painting and of the allegory it contains.

The vision of *Corneliu Michăilescu* originated in cubism as well; in the paintings he executed around 1925—1930, the volumes were organized into strict rhythms of circles and rectangles whose function of analyzing the structures combined with a discreetly decorative tendency. His work seldom expressed a clearly militant attitude in the best sense of the word. Without being alien to the drama of the humble, Corneliu Michăilescu's paintings did not evince any violent opposition to the conditions of life during the inter-war society.

The themes of his art are prevailingly urban: the aspects of the modern town with its turbulent geometry (recalling maybe the vision of Otto Dix or of other painters from the group "Neue Sachlichkeit") often inspired him. In their world made up of asphalt and concrete appear monumental figures of workers, dominating the entire scenery and introducing a message of

genuine humanism. In other paintings the image is organized in the style of analytical cubism and it is generally recognizable. One can detect here the lesson of Braque when he painted at l'Estaque. The Romanian artist saw in the reaction against impressionsim, represented by cubism, not only a strict structuring of volumes but also the interpretation of colour as a compact powerful mass. His painting represents a cerebral contribution to an art which, all along its history, was characterized mostly by a lyrical feeling.

Through the art of *Marcel Iancu*, the avant-garde was to incorporate elements belonging to various currents; at first, he adopted an expressionist vision in which both chromatics and the abrupt simplifications of the line originate in the stylistics of the group of Dresden (although certain portraits were influenced by Kokoschka). In fact, though expressionist literature seldom appeared in the non-avant-garde magazines ("Bluze albastre" and "Cuvîntul liber" for instance) it was not the same with fine arts: reproductions of engravings by Masereel, Kaethe Kollwitz, Anton Kolig were published, besides the antifascist graphical works by Aurel Jiquidi, Nicolae Cristea, Aurel Mărculescu, Vasile Kazar, Vasile Dobrian, Jules Perahim, Gheorghe Labin which included obvious expressionist elements.

A little later, about the year 1930, Iancu was to adopt analytical cubism and, soon after, a halucinating vision like the one in *Casting Dice* in which — amid the symbols of a threatening zodiac — there occurs a real cosmic tragedy. There is in this disquieting image the anticipation of the approaching cataclism of war. His hopes (expressed in a drawing of 1933 describing Robinson alone on a cliff welcoming the arrival of the rescuing ship) were shattered; an art haunted by painful forebodings was taking their place.

The orientation towards surrealism became more prominent in 1930 when the magazine "Unu" frequently eulogized the oneiric and dealt with the theme of "the reconciliation between action and dream". It is true, however, that the Romanian avant-garde vehemently contested surrealism at times, that the magazine "Integral" — though publishing the "automatic psychism" of Ion Călugăru — considered that "surrealism was a belated current", that art could no longer accept "the diseased disintegration, surrealist romanticism". It is also true that the programme of Romanian surrealism was never clearly defined by any of the adherents to the movement. In this respect, the consistent surrealist attitude of *Victor Brauner* (1903—1966) is seldom to be met in Romanian painting. His activity closely connected and influenced by the ideas promoted by "Unu" all through its publication, was always marked by surrealism conveyed through a harrowing vision in which the weird, the grotesque and the horrible merge. In a ferocious nightmare, people change into strange trees, they interpenetrate, floating as it were in an undefinable space. The theme of man living in terror and pain in an oppressive world is resumed over and over again in Brauner's painting, an illustration of a firm social and aesthetic metaphysics. Exalting the idea of impotence in the face of the irrational which deprives man of any personality, Brauner's imagery expresses but part of the painful protest of other avant-garde artists (Maxy for instance) more confident in the destiny of mankind.

Although closer to the aesthetics of expressionism, the painting of *Hans Eder* (1883—1956) may be considered to be related — owing to its philosophical conclusions — to the art of Brauner and can be rightly included in

the chapter devoted to the avant-garde. His personages suffer the same implacable destiny, pain and failure. The world is governed by the forces of evil and of ugliness, the aspirations toward good and kindness are mercilessly nipped in the bud. The figures at the social periphery of the world are rendered pathetically in distorted contours, in an austere, aggressive colouring.

Towards the end of the 1930s and early in the next decade, surrealist elements made their appearance in the art of Mattis-Teutsch, coexisting with elements of abstractionism. Surrealism, as an illustration of some fantastic narratives is sometimes to be found in the works of Margareta Sterian and of Magdalena Rădulescu. Abstract art seldom appears in any valuable works. We should mention in this respect, the introduction of expressive simplifications into the tradition of the forms and chromatics of the Romanian school, duscernible with the very young — at the time — *Alexandru Istrati* (b.1915). His painting tended to a purification of details, to a concrete expression of the theme; the artist firmly separated the volumes, rediscovering the materiality of the object, its inward tension. The pictorial language of *Natalia Dumitrescu* (b.1915) was more cordial, colours harmonized within more limited surfaces, with an acute sense of the rythm. The agitation of forms, the peculiar tendency to include them in a unifying image of some lines of force dominating the composition, made of her paintings powerful, energetic constructions.

Some representatives of the Romanian avant-garde went abroad soon after their début. *Arthur Segal* (1875—1944), for example, an artist born in Iași, after exhibiting pointillist pictures with the group "The Artistic Youth", left for Berlin in 1910 where he asserted himself as an expressionist. In 1910—1916 he was in Zurich where he participated — with works executed in the symultaneous style — in the dadaists' exhibition at the Voltaire Cabaret. He invented spectralism, characterized by surrounding the painted objects with loud colours harmonized with great inventiveness. Many artists who went abroad never severed their ties with national tradition, while some of them participated periodically for a time in the Bucharest exhibitions. Besides Magdalena Rădulescu, we should also mention *Dimitrie Vârbănescu* (1908—1963), *George Tomaziu* (b. 1913), *Eugen Drăguțescu* (b. 1914), *Horia Damian* (b. 1922), *Alexandru Istrati*, *Natalia Dumitrescu*, sculptors *Borgo Pround* (b. 1900), a former diciple of Paciurea, *Etienne Hajdu* (b. 1907), *Ticu Arămescu* (1914—1944).

War and the instauration of the dictatorship were to put an end to the avant-garde experiment. After having resisted the often brutal and injurious campaign unleashed — at the end of the 1930s more especially — by the conservative press and the journalists of the extreme right, the avant-garde movement was suppressed through administrative measures. The same as in Germany and Italy at the time the political interdictions made certain important representatives of the avant-garde — Brauner or Iancu for example — leave the country and go to France where they hoped they could carry on their activity, safe from the encroachments of the state. Those who remained in Romania were no longer able to organize any exhibition during the war.

Soon after 1944, the avant-garde revived and identified closely with the ideas of the political left. Some of the surrealist and neoconstructivist groups proclaimed a pro-communist creed; but their fate was to be the same as in every other country of Eastern Europe (and as in post-revolutionary

Russia after 1924). In 1948, a vast destructive campaign was started by the Party apparatchiks, supported by some dogmatic literary and art critics. (Symptomatically, the terms of the attacks were similar to those which had been displayed by the extreme right-wing in the '30s: the avant-garde was accused of despising the national traditions and following the model of Western "capitalist" and "decadent" art). Nevertheless it is the merit of the most prominent Romanian artists that, all along the decade and a half that passed before the new and definitive assertion of the identity of Romanian artistic creativity, they did not make any important concession and preserved the national tradition almost entirely unaltered.

Contemporary Art and the Traditions of Folklore

One of the essential problems of Romanian art in the 1940s and the 1950s was to preserve its identity resting on such an ancient tradition. Under circumstances as those occuring during this period, when models were imposed which had nothing in common with its specific spiritual character, Romanian art was able to preserve its fundamental aspirations to equilibrium and lyricism. And as the campaign of the dogmatic critics was aimed at establishing predominantly narrative and allegorical criteria, it was but natural that the first attempts at recovering the specific characteristics of art should appear in the narrative and the allegory.

In the early half of the 20th century, the narrative compositions were often marred by their expositive character, by a grandiloquence in utter contrast with the structural lyricism of Romanian painting typical of its most representative works. It is in this domain that some of the most significant changes of the artistic conceptions in recent years were to occur. There was a great development of monumental art in this period; the public and cultural edifices erected in almost all the towns and cities of the country offered the space necessary for the renaissance of an old traditional art in Romanian culture. As far back as the early decades of the 20th century the art of the master painters active during the Middle Ages and the Romanian Renaissance began to be studied in every detail; after World War II a more systematic and specialized research was started by art historians as an answer to the attempts of introducing "realist-socialist" conventional models.

From the mid '60s to the early '70s the renewed interest in the values of the old painting was the basic condition for the creation and assertion of traditional forms of expression uttered by new stylistic trends; a large activity purposing to bring out the specific significance of art in the past ages was undertaken. However in the last decade, with the abberant development of various forms of the personality cult of the former dictator, it was prohibited to represent in a large scale painting any historical event if it was not directly related to the biography (real or imaginary) of the president of the country.

Most of the artists refused to comply with such unprecedented conditions and, as a direct result, the monumental painting continously decayed. That is why the generation of painters who compelled recognition in the '70s deserve the attention of the art historian.

Virgil Almășanu (b. 1926) is one of the founders of the new direction in historical painting. His works conjure up the old frescoes; a subtle chromatics of whites and greys, a firm simplification of the line, a harmonious construction of the groups which rhythmically organize the large surface of the painting, all this lends them a grave poesy. Theodor Enescu, the main exegete of Almășanu's work, has emphasized the fact that "a phase of experiments drawing its sources from the free expressionist forms of neorealism and of the Mexican mural painting will soon be abandoned; the painter understands the necessity of a period of more rigorous discipline in the construction of forms." This long investigation started twenty-five years ago, when the echoes of the Byzantine iconography could be clearly distinguished in his work; the result is a lofty classical vision, integrating the tragical into a construction which rejects grandiloquence and prosaism alike.

The historical paintings of *Traian Brădean* (b. 1927) are filled with a romantic élan, not in the sense of an inward tumult but as an élan reflected in his sculptural allegories. The artist lucidly holds in check his lyrical effusions, allowing the line to organize the images; the pathetic expression in the gestures of the personages is toned down by the quiet hues distributed over broad surfaces. The drawing recalls the materiality of a basrelief, an impression enhanced by the ample line revealing the synthesis between classicist forms and those deriving from the stylization of folk art.

The allegories of *Elena Greculesi* (b. 1928) reflect a different type of synthesis: although the line creates a definite contour and the movement displays a certain romantic tension, the principles of the organization come from the syntax of cubism and of constructivism. The adhesion of *Spiru Chintilă* (1921—1985) to the programme of cubism — a current of modern art — is even more obvious. Chintilă's paintings evoke historical by means of a dynamic narrative. One might say that his cubism is temperamental, it does not come from the desire to dissect form but from the aspiration towards organizing the image.

The vision of *Octav Grigorescu* (1933—1987) originated in other areas of the tradition of Romanian painting. Even when he drew on actual historical events, his works convey a mysterious poetic atmosphere couched in a gorgeous chromatics, in tensely-dramatic forms. There is in his work something of the atmosphere of the 18th century fresco bathed in an evanescent tragical twilight. It was sometimes suggested that his painting borders on surrealism, a disputable characterization, because the fantastic elements in this complex painting do not lead to anguish or nightmare but to a lyrical reinterpretation of the legend.

Ion Bitzan (b. 1924), an artist of great inventiveness, the author of objects devoid of any useful function created to no practical purpose, has reached this point after passing through the stages of a realism suggesting sometimes the vision of the Mexican mural painters.

The vision of *Vladimir Șetran* (b. 1935) was more sinuous, evincing his responsiveness to several currents of world art. His wide compositions can be placed somewhere between *pop* art and the large-scale poster; the narrative captures the attention of the on-looker in the spot, making him grasp the significance of the episode represented.

Ion Stendl (b. 1938) turns his attention to remote times, to archaic civilizations which the archaeologist reconstructs with apparent minuteness from vestiges unearthed through excavations. As a matter of fact his recon-

stitutions are the product of the mind; they represent archetypes of a specific culture with wide reverberations in modern civilization. They are fragments from a world cherished in the memory of an entire nation. Significant when we consider the narrative as a genre apart requiring a specific stylistic treatment, is the cooperation between two artists quite different in point of temperament.

From the analysis of the narrative tendencies present in Romanian art today one can draw the conclusion that, no matter the stylistic solutions adopted, an important change occurred in the attitude of certain outstanding artists. In a predominantly lyrical art, it was the merit of some painters endowed with a great force of epic evocation to have emphasized the significance of life in its most complex aspects. The artistic personality who gave this qualitatively new direction of Romanian painting its most profound phylosophic significance is *Corneliu Baba* (b. 1906). Although its renewing substance is not always understood, the painting of Baba represents a synthesis of artistic ideas bringing together the pictorial vision of prestigious epochs and the significances of the present age. Some time ago, in his own commentaries — and sincere confessions — that accompanied the pictures in an album with reproductions of his works, the artist stressed the importance of Petrașcu's lesson during his early professional training. Starting from these stylistic premises, Corneliu Baba enriched them with elements from Rembrandt's painting in which light and shade "became petrified in a fight of magic iridescences."

The artist created a language perfectly suited to the expression of the grave, fundamental truths of the history of this century which, however, integrates the permanent essences of human existence. The prestige the artistic narrative has acquired thanks to the painting of Baba has been decisive in many respects. This does not mean that narrative historical painting has exclusively taken as a model the artistic creations of this founder of tradition. Yet, especially in a period when the painting describing present developments was often meant to be illustrative, grandiloquent, rhetorically celebrative, this grave, concentrated painting testifying to the painter's civic and philosophic conscience and enjoying the strong support of his meditation on the means of expression, on the relationships between the real universe and the universe described in painting, meant a necessary return to the foundations of art itself. A series of allegorical paintings, *The Mad King*, never exhibited, is a powerful commentary on the ridicule and terror of the recent dictatorship.

The fact that Baba and Ciucurencu — who belonged to the same generation which had reached full maturity after 1944 — were professors at the Bucharest Institute of Fine Arts during the same period of time, was of great importance for the professional training of the younger generation, confronted as they were with the new artistic requirements. There are, of course, differences between the conceptions of the two schools regarding painting and its meanings. However, we believe that it is irrelevant to consider they were utterly opposed to one another: the artistic climate in Romania a quarter of a century ago could only benefit by the coexistence of the two schools; there was not only an emulation — as it was said — but also a broadening of the horizon due to the example of artistic creations complementary to one another whose prestige affected the new militant art as well.

The relationships with tradition have been one of the problems of modern Romanian culture. From the inception of romanticism until the first decades

of the 20th century, there prevailed conceptions supporting the adoptions of subjects from the life of the village often treated with a pronounced taste for the picturesque or, a little later, conceptions of the value of folklore forms. A significant synthesis was produced at the time: the data of a specific life, of a specific ethnical culture were treated according to a modern vision, responsive to the movement of ideas of world art.

In the last few decades the process has become much more complex. The traditional tendencies of rediscovering in the life and culture of the village the origin of a specific sensibility are, no doubt, still present. The exhibitions organized in recent years still show paintings inspired by the rural landscape, revealing a nostalgia for the patriarchal life of the village of yore. The main theme, however, is the contemporary village, the dynamism of the changes it has undergone, the permanencies of folk culture. One of the painters who have revealed the poetic significance of the village today is *Viorel Mărginean* (b. 1933). It was said that his painting descends from folk art, which is true not only in the sense of a refined treatment of the morphological and chromatic attributes of folkloric imagery, but particularly in the sense of a spiritual consubstantiality.

The landscape is often seen from above in an aerial perspective, the trees resembling a delicate tracery spreading on the rolling hills all around the horizon. Iligh above, strange birds, reminding one of the stylized birds in the old Oltenian carpets, dart through the air. The calligraphic finesse of the line, the harmonious often exuberant chromatics conceal a reflective temperament, a rigorous and gentle builder of images.

In his landscapes, *Constantin Dipşe* (b. 1919) confesses the spiritual affinity of the painter with the chromatics and rhythms of folk art. His notation is apparently spontaneous; in real fact however it is based on a mental pattern on which he works for a long time, with wide planes stretching to the end of the horizon, with warm dominant colours harmoniously distributed on the surface of the painting, defining the objects in a spirit recalling the 18th century miniatures.

Georgeta Năpăruş (b. 1930) resorts to folk art to create a synthesis comprising crystalizations of attributes taken over from mediaeval miniatures and embroidery, reinterpretations producing a complex syntax. The spots of colour make up melodious constructions, like in some surprising colages of fragments of brilliant fabrics. The narrative brings together the fantastic and the apparent anecdote, which are in fact a clever reorganization of details in such a way as to form a rigorously articulated ensemble, in which the effusions of a subtle colourist are held in check.

This is, in fact, a fundamental trait of Romanian art whose source of inspiration is rural civilization, both old and new. Rejecting the mere description, simplifying forms and reducing some to signs, the artists have achieved interpretations which oppose the direct expression or "reading" of the subject.

In the last few decades, the metaphorical system integrated into the art of folkloric inspiration is created in keeping with the forms and models of folk art. The philosophical substance, crystalized into metaphors and symbols of course, is the shaping element of the image in this type of artistic creation. Avowedly or not, the artists take over especially the model of certain founders of tradition — Brâncuşi or Ţuculescu.

The artists belonging to the generation of the 1970s have often turned their attention to the fundamental meanings of folk tradition. They have

covered a road that led them as far as the origins of mythical culture and opened for them the wide horizon of the ontological and ethical meanings of tradition. With *Marin Gherasim* (b. 1937), for instance, *the hearth* is an essential sign of archaic civilization; it is the symbol of beginnings, of permanence, of the existence of an entire people gathering round the flame lit thousands of years ago. *Sorin Dumitrescu* (b. 1946) creates a complex ambience whose main elements — stone and wood — call up the age-old Romanian material culture. The painter is consistently rediscovering the fundamental spiritual meaning of the tradition. Gherasim started from a vision of traditional forms, then experimented with surrealism and abstract art as some of his commentators have shown. He was consistently attracted by the symbols of an archaic civilization, the cycle of the *Gates* and of the *Thrones*, created in the 1970s, suggesting a simplicity preserved in the sumptuous forms of the ritual culture as well; yet the *gate* is symbollically opening on to another universe, another time.

The road *Horea Flămând* (b. 1941) has travelled is difficult to include in one definition that should throw light on all its stages of development. He started by making a name for himself very early, as an excellent portraitist, foreshadowing — it seemed at the time — his orientation towards a romantic art; he concomitantly was able to express the surprising modernity of the peasant household objects. In general the relations of Romanian sculpture with folk art are not at all simple. In the first half of the century they were reduced mostly to themes. Brâncuși's lesson had not been assimilated and the great majority of the sculptors of the time preferred the technique of modelling, whereby a deep lyrical contents could be expressed most adequately. This tradition lasted into the post-war period and the most outstanding masters of the time — Jalea, Medrea, Ladea, Anghel, Irimescu — consolidated it.

One of the exceptions which deserves our consideration is the work of *Gheza Vida* (1913—1980). Descending from an old, specific peasant civilization, from the Maramuresh, in the north of Transylvania, Vida created an ample poem inspired by a world in which legends and everyday occurrences — the latter too resembling a ritual coming from remote sources — intermingle in the most natural way. No other Romanian artist identified himself so deeply with the world in which he lived. The dynamism of his sculptural vision helped him capture the episodes of everyday life in full movement, with a pathos and a vital force so natural that things — it was said — seem to lose their artificial qualities as objects made by man and resemble the objects in nature, becoming identical with them.

His natural inclination to expressionism, enhanced by the predilection for it of Transylvanian art in the early decades of the 20th century, did not escape the notice of exegetes. It was not, of course, a simple stylistic influence contemporary art exerted upon Vida: the austere and simple life with no equivocal morals the people in this part of the country lead, their force and inward concentration, the gravity with which they carry on the most usual activities, determined the powerful expression of Vida's sculptures.

Ion Vlasiu (b. 1908) is another artist from the same generation who gave sculpture a specific philosophical tint. Expressionism with him takes on a different shape and coexists with a simple, romantic modelling. Sometimes, symbolism in his work borders on surrealism originating in the simplified wood carvings of folk art. Yet Vlasiu clearly expresses his deeply rationalist creed and polemizes in its behalf with the "spectres" of aggressiveness, with the threatening world of wild animals that seem to alight from the popular bestiaries of the Middle Ages. At other times, the form is reduced to a

symbolic sign: it can be a roadside wooden cross or a boundary marker which signifies the permanence of an old civilization and of the traces it has left in the consciouness of our contemporaries.

The work of *Ovidiu Maitec* (b. 1925) represents a complex synthesis between the Brancusian model and folkloric syntax. There is in his works some of the crude grandeur of the objects belonging to the ancient folk cultures: the gate, the pillar, carved simply, never artificial, reintegrated in the primordial order of things. Yet, when penetrating deep into the world of symbols of ancestral culture, Maitec discovers unsuspected relations between the concrete object and its metaphorical projection. One can notice the obsessive presence of certain central themes: the *flight* and the *gate*; the gate itself seems to unfold wings in a vast flight.

Maitec's structures contribute another theme, light, which significantly completes the theme of the soaring. In a civilization marked by the symbol of the all-powerful sun, in which miracles were performed in a world bathed in profuse light and not deep in the night reverberating with magic incantations, the repetition of this theme has a very clear meaning; especially as the artist associates it with forms recalling the instruments of modern technology, with the broad wings of a radar for instance. The miracle Maitec's art celebrates is the miracle of the powerful creative idea.

It may seem at first sight that the vision of *Gheorghe Iliescu-Călinești* (b. 1932) stems directly from folk art. This conclusion is also supported by the manner in which the utensils from the traditional inventory of the peasant household are transformed into genuine monuments to the anonymous work of the ploughman and to archaic civilization, to its great vitality. Actually, the artist tries to discover their spiritual significances: he finds in them images which confer upon rural art an authentic significance. This is a tendency often present in 20th century art which draws on archaic sources considered to be structural and spiritual models of the modern. Romanian art today belongs to a specific category: it was not obliged to seek for these models *outside* its own tradition, in the remote zones where the rigorous conscience of primitive creation is preserved. Thus, the modernity of the object does not come from the opposition to ancestral civilization, but from a relationship of continuity between them.

The same approach characterizes the sculpture of *Georgeta Caragiu* (b. 1929) as well, an artist endowed with a sure sense of equilibrium, whose works — prevailingly figurative — demonstrate that the relationships with the old peasant art are more complicated than any programmatic theory may suggest. Utterly simplified, her works eliminate the anecdotical and picturesque elements, they are built harmoniously but contain expressionist poetic touches as well. The mythology of the folklore is not expressed by means of narrative reconstitutions, but through symbols embodying the very origins of the folk ethos. Although in point of sculptural synthesis *Vasile Gorduz* (b. 1933) is not influenced by folklore, the fantastic universe in which his personages move suggests some emphatic relationships with the universe of primordial mythologies. He has made a name for himself in contemporary art as an excelent portrait sculptor as well; yet the other facet (an imagination able to create "zoologies" belonging to a world hidden deep in the memory of the primordial times which make up the miraculous substance of so many Romanian fairy-tales) is equally significant for his vision.

The danger of adopting an illustrative "ethnographism" which, twenty years ago, was threatening this direction of Romanian art, has been gradually

eliminated. Maybe not completely: superficial interpretations which do not go deeper than morphology, ornament and a picturesque narrative may still make their appearance. There are also circumstances when the adhesion to a style congenial to the style of folk art lacks the vibrant feeling of authenticity. However, the essential characteristic of the entire movement purposing to reassess the significances of folk art is a concern with emphasizing the philosophical bases, the ethical meanings, the logical relations between the primordial form and the form created by modern civilization.

We find it again in the sculptures of artists such as *Alexandru Călinescu-Arghira* (b. 1935), *Rodica Stanca Pamfil* (b. 1934), *Nicăpetre* (b. 1936) illustrating not only the synthesis of the archaic and the modern — which of late has become a commonplace which only new angles of stylistic interpretation could save from routine — but also a synthesis between primitive structures and a rigorous geometrizing expressionist treatment; even if such works reminds one of the mechanism peculiar to peasant industry, they retain an autonomy of form, a symmetry which make of them sculptures governed by their own laws, far removed from faithful copies of objects belonging to a rural civilization.

This is also the case of the sculptures made by *Alexandru Gheorghiță* (b. 1931) which show his keen sense of the expressiveness of the material, of a plastic alternation of rough and highly polished surfaces. The plastic expression is achieved by a simultaneous harmony of subject and representation, so that finally we have the impression that his sculpture is the result of a genesis of rational structures gradually created out of primordial forms. Even artists who adhered consistently to the principles of figurative art were attracted some time during their evolution, by folkloristic simplifications and by their ability to integrate the real into a characteristic metaphorical system.

The universe of folk art is a territory where in the last few decades one can witness the endeavours of artists to express the inward sense, reduced to a symbol, of the visible world. It is the wide horizon of folk art which enables many artists of different temperamental inclinations to discover their real personality under hypostases which illustrate the complex aspects of nature and the complex attitude of artists to them.

Petru Jecza (b. 1939) does not lose contact with the real, yet his points of contact are only symbolic; it is exactly what happens in the forms of primitive sculpture which are never merely functional but represent, even if only allusively, a particular object from the world familiar to the creator and the on-looker alike.

From the discreet humour characterizing the narrative episodes of folk mythology created by *Șerban Crețoiu* (b. 1941), from the concentration of the idea in a widely metaphorical symbolic form practised by *Mihai Mihai* (1942—1975) — who died too early to fulfil the promises of his art —, to the massive volumes organized by *Florica Ioan* (b. 1923) in the sense of rationalizing the sculptural masses and essentializing them, one can delineate the frontiers of a territory where the return to the forms of the neolithic is to regain its primordial significances. The expressionism of *Doina Lie* (b. 1929), lyrical and balanced in its syntax; the expressionism of *Jenö Korondi* (b. 1935), aspiring after symbolic simplifications; the realistic approach to art of *Ion Nicolin* (b. 1931), they all have assumed a new dimension through the contact with the forms of folk art, a dimension which some of the artists mentioned above were able to add to their own work, even when the latter did not belong to the same artistic domain.

The examples sculpture offers are, of course, clearer when the relations with the art of more ancient epochs or with folk art are discussed: it is easier then to recognize in a sculpture the treatment of volumes, the use of traditional materials, the manner in which simplifications are effected. The language of painting, even if not more complex, requires a more detailed consideration, for the reproduction of the model is more subtly done and the intervention of colours can add to the compositional pattern an element apt to captivate the onlooker and make him establish comparisons with the chromatics of the folkloric model, which does not necessarily imply that these works correspond to the essential traits of folklore creations.

George Apostu (1934—1986) is one of the most important Romanian artists of the last half of the century. His sculptures — many of them not a cabinet-art confined to small artificial spaces, but a monumental art standing freely on the ground, under the sky — are directly carved in wood or stone. In the first stages of his development there are traces of the influence of Brâncuși, at that time not yet fully re-discovered by the Romanian sculpture. Apostu has also acknowledged his early debt to archaic art of his country; but influences are not always direct and precise: the relations between his sculptures and the structure of the folk art cannot be discovered at a first glance.

The artist — as the critic Ionel Jianou has once noticed — chose the stone or the marble every time when he wanted to reveal the evolution of inner forms by the expressive movement of curves and round surfaces, carefully polished; when he intended to express the hieratic sense of primal forms, the austerity of folk art, the unity of spiritual and sensitivity, Apostu has chosen the wood.

His *Father and Son* cycle is one of the major contribution to the contemporary European sculpture. It is a series of abstract sculptures and, at the same time, profoundly human, embodying a spiritual essence, the huge trunks, proudly standing on earth, are anonimous personages in a mythical story about the continuity of life. They are revitalizing the values of the wood sculpture, neglected in the Western art, since the end of the Gothic. From this point of view. Apostu was a follower of Brâncuși, who had been the first to revive this art at the beginning of the century.

Another series, *Butterflies*, evoke the funerary poles in the Romanian peasant churchyards. The artist captured the everlasting spiraling movement towards the sky. The sculptures are — as their author said — "forms coming from the night and ascending to the sun; they express, perhaps, an aspiration of my soul towards the heights of freedom".

The 40 monumental sculptures placed in various parks and fields of Romania, France, Italy, Hungary, Japan, Canada, West Germany represent another important chapter of Apostu's work. Fascinated by the miracle of sun, he has created at Suwako, in Japan, a huge *Mirror of the Sun*, a granit block which reflects the light and, at Galați, in Romania, a steel sculpture, 20 m high, *The Fruit of the Sun*, where the mass volumes are replaced by space volumes and by the dynamic intensity of the metal beans.

Apostu's work is claiming its origin in the deep sources of traditional art, and is much closer to the ideas of primal ages, to the ethos of the Romanian folk culture than to the old forms of folk narration.

At a certain moment, the dogmatic criticism tended to establish an "exact model" of form, of chromatics and, of course, of the subject of folk art. It is the indisputable merit of the painters of all generations, to have preserved the real meaning of the traditional artistic creation. The researches

of ethnographers have materialized in books which have revealed the wide horizons of folk art, the significances of a specific phenomenon, of the continuity of the traditonal ethos, of the thinking and sensibility embedded in folklore, of the unity between the ethical and the aesthetic.

In recent years, the Bucharest Village Museum has played an important part in the assertion of the originality and modernity of folk art in this country. An institution of great tradition, one of the oldest of its kind in Europe, the museum has demonstrated that it is not only the guardian of invaluable artistic creations but also a dynamic research institution able to reveal the significant relations between traditional and modern art. Several exhibitions organized during this period, have brought together creations belonging to the various areas of national culture. It has been proved that it is not enough to take into account only the specific forms of folk art in order to grasp the atmosphere, the spirit of folk culture; that the mere assimilation of the morphology and syntax of folklore cannot create a vision which should reflect the philosophical substance of folk tradition.

We cannot deny the value of the research work carried on by certain painters in the plastic *language* of folk art, in the vocabulary used by traditional creations. It is not only the figurative image — the fresco, the miniature, the icon — but also the embroidery, the fabrics, the carpets, everything related to a chromatic harmony, that has been examined with the eye of the painter and not of the museologist. The relations between colour and meaning were analyzed, as well as the symbolic forms of chromatic construction, the significance of the geometrical reduction, of the rhythm, of the specific treatment of planes.

It is strange enough that under these circumstances favourable to the development of a vision inspired by folklore, no *naïve* school of painting has asserted itself, i.e. a new direction created by the intuitive assimilation of specific means of expression. In Romania, most of the naive painters and sculptors descend from the traditional peasant art. It is true that no schools were formed so important as those which have become famous in other countries with rather similar cultural traditions, like Yugoslavia for instance. In certain regions however, especially where the peasant painting on wood or glass had long evolved a style of their own, comparatively numerous groups of naïve artists have made their appearance.

Such an area in which artistic folk creation has extended to easel painting is represented by the Apuseni Mountains (bordering the Transylvanian plateau to the West). A particularly interesting phenomenon is the appearance of an entire family of painters — the family of the peasant *Ion Niță-Nicodim*; the candour is genuine, the treatment of forms, space and colour does not follow any pre-established pattern. Sometimes, the model of folk art cannot be recognized in the works of the peasant painters, in the first place because, as is known, the technique of oil painting is quite different from that of tempera, prevalingly cultivated by traditional art and in the second place, because the repertory of themes is different, predominantly autobiographical. An example in point is the poet and prose writer *Petru Vintilă* (b. 1922) whose paintings evince a rich imagination in the pictorial narrative, combining the vision of folklore and children's art.

It is interesting to note — but it was also to be expected in a certain measure — that the painters who graduated from the Fine Arts Institute and created for themselves a style of painting which tends to integrate with that of the naïve painters, are closer to the exeample of folk iconography in past

centuries, closer as well to the compositional patterns of folk woodcuts. It is the case of *Ștefan Știrbu* (b. 1939) whose pictures — painted on wood as a rule like the icons serving as models — recall not only the spirit but also the form of traditional folk painting.

The relations with folklore of the contemporary Romanian art are complex indeed. To the investigation of the ancestral fund of symbols or of the morphology typical of folk iconography, one must add the translation in the pictorial narrative of the type of stories to be found in folk literature — sometimes in anecdotes, some other times in fairy-tales or ballads. The problem obviously pertains to the "reading" of the image rather than to style or typology. The grouping together of the personages on the surface of the painting, the Brueghelian anecdote or that recalling the 18th century Romanian miniature, are characteristic of *Ion Vrăneanțu* (b. 1938) or *Dimitrie Gavrilean* (b. 1942). Significant, in this perspective, is the origin of certain surrealist tendencies in the nineteen-sixties. Few are their connections with the syntax of the surrealism of Brauner's generation; and, we should also note that the consequences in the domains of visual art of the activities of the young surrealists of the ninteen-thirties and nineteen-forties were not at all important. Yet surrealism — formerly avant-garde — was one of the first movements to make a mordant commentary of contemporary social life, of its absurdity.It was the merit of a few painters belonging to the younger generation to have understood at the time the significance of the relations between the fabulous elements in the folk tales and the surrealist image. Among them, *Paula Ribariu* (b. 1938) and *Carolina Iacob* (b. 1940) used to organize painting into compositional schemes which adopted the suggestions of the fantastic to be found in the folk narrative. This was not meant to be a repetition of the fantastic couched in a plastic image, but an extraction of the poetic element to form a synthesis in which romantic notes were to be more and more frequent.

However, surrealism did not appear in the Romanian painting of the period only as a consequence of the investigation of folk art. With certain artists — *Florin Niculiu* (b. 1928) for instance — there existed a poetic affinity: the artist does not adhere to the doctrine of the movement, his images are not projections of some subconscious state of mind. His compositions are coherent in the sense that they possess an objective existence similar to the objective existence proper. The details are plausible on the plane of the real, but the relations between them are subjected to another logic — the logic of poetry; Niculiu is concerned with the logic of the questions rather than with that of the answers.

It is difficult to find an exact definition for the visionary style of *Henry Mavrodin* (b. 1937). His metaphysic symbolism — as it is called by some — or magic realism — after some others — is expressed neither by allegories nor by symbols; it is based on a dialogue with a different reality that contains his anxiety. The paintings display a mistery which survives in the images placed in an abstract space and immobile time. His polyptychs (up to 9 volets) resume the same element, treated in various ways, projecting the same obsessions, "the same will of constructing and rage of deconstructing" (Ionel Jianou). The drawings and engravings of *Johann Untch* (b. 1926), reminding of Chirico, but in a more dynamic contrast of forms, those of *Dan Erceanu* (b. 1943), where the irony turns into sarcastic tones, are other specific reinterpretations of surrealist grammar.

Closer to the classical syntax of surrealism, *Sever Frențiu* (b. 1931) resorts to its traditional elements; it is the dreamy atmosphere created with the help

of strictly pictorial means and never by juxtaposing heterogeneous elements, that gives one the felling of a strange world. In the much disputed creation of *Sabin Bălaşa* (b. 1932) the surrealist effect is produced by the creation of the atmosphere rather than by an arbitrary association of objects.

Extremely complex is the vision of *Ştefan Câlţia* (b. 1942) whose painting is included, disputably enough, within the area of surrealism. To tell the truth, his images suggest Hyeronimus Bosch rather than the masters of modern surrealism: filled with the sap of a robust humour, they depict fabulous personages and create an atmosphere in which the grotesque borders on a delicate poesy. The artist creates a world which, beyond any anecdotic element, no matter how juicy, is described in rich colours.

The inclination towards surrealism of *Vladimir Zamfirescu* (b. 1936) is completely different: one of the most gifted portraitists of his generation, he creates a strange world in which the personages seem to exteriorize their dreams, probing deep into their subconscious. The precision of the psychological analysis is suggested by the exact construction of the composition and of the details whereby a strage wakefulness of those who dream is conveyed. Pictorial in the best sense of the word, the image with Zamfirescu shows how refined his colouring is; the constructive intervention of reason demonstrates —in the case of Vladimir Zamfirescu — that it is the only one able to guarantee the psychological and aesthetic precision of the irrational.

Sorin Ilfoveanu (b. 1946) is one more representative of this generation of painters; the concise line, the apparently spontaneous composition, the chromatics reduced to a few essential tones, the oneiric narative are the components of a vision placing his painting at the interesection of surrealism with poetic realism. The narrative calls to mind the meanings of folk myths and of the mediaeval fables both grotesque and candour merge in this delightful, dream-like painting.

It is quite natural to find more often in graphic arts notations of images coming from the deep layers of the conscience. One might say that passing moods can be fixed more directly in a drawing, and that the line can swiftly express meanings which painting and sculpture find it more difficult to render, as their forms require a longer elaboration. However, one can notice in the case of Romanian contemporary graphics that the investigation of the deep layers of the conscience does not imply the adhesion of the artists to the doctrine of the current, but temperamental affinities. The problem becomes even more intricate when an intermediate reality, i.e. a literary text, intervenes; if the illustration refers to a surrealist text, it is but natural to adopt a surrealist syntax. In fact, however, the artist "reads" the text by means of his illustration and it often happens that his interpretation renews the traditional interpretations of literary criticism.

That is why the illustrations of *Marcela Cordescu* (1913—1984) have become points of reference for the reading of fundamental books, so that the reader can hardly separate the image she has created from the significances he himself has found in the text. The apparent surrealist touches of Marcela Cordescu's drawing came from her ability to go deep into the poetic significances of a text, and even to identify herself with them; the artist felt they were hers, her "reading" gave them an always unexpected sense, yet fully justified in its essential data. Thus the surrealist "projection" is not necesarily that of the text but of the artist's subconscious, where the poetic meanings have been preserved and reappraised.

With *Ion State* (1937—1977) drawing near to the surrealist vision was a matter of temperament; of all the black-and-white artists who, at a certain moment of their evolution found themselves — willingly or not — close enough to surrealism, State was perhaps the one who drew near to it in the most natural way. The analysis of the deep layers of conscience generated a tragical tension expressed in various symbolic forms which, for the on-looker today, are premonitions of the death of the artist (Ion State died in the earthquake of March 1977). His thorough artistic and literary culture were a strong support for his investigations in the domains of style and technique; the result was that his illustrations — for many of which he was awarded national and international prizes — were perfectly suited to the philosophical substance of the books they were to illustrate.

State's generation (under his influence to a certain extent) has often used surrealist procedures in order to increase the expressiveness of the surrealist language. With *George Leolea* (1938—1984), *Theodora Moisescu-Stendl* (b.1938) and *Damian Petrescu* (b.1937) for a time, the compositional rigour of the engravings points to a clear understanding of the function of the line, of the formal accents, in emphasizing the guiding idea. Surrealism is rather morphological than syntactic and does not impair the rationalism of the image.

Surrealism with *Florin Pucă* (1932—1990) is a space towards which the artist is carried by his intuitive association of the grotesque with a lyrical delicacy, an intuition which enabled him to preserve his spontaneity. A tragical note underlies his apparently burlesque images, the personage in his drawings (an ironical self-portrait) is the witness of comical occurrences apparently. But a careful examination reveals the bitter smile, the same as that of the clowns in expressionist art. He was, in fact, a tragic *picaro*.

An artist who has created a stylistic formula all his own is *Eugen Mihăescu* (b. 1937). His drawings have been printed in various journals and newspapers in many millions of copies (*The New York Times*, *the New Yorker*, *The Time*, *The Fortune*, *Graphis*, *Le Figaro* etc.). A statement he made several years ago is very eloquent: "I try to put dynamite in the ineffable space between the pencil and the paper". Some of his drawings are intense synthesis of Piranesi, Kafka and Orwell, the artist carrying a political struggle against totalitarian regimes all over the world; he is unveiling the tragedy of human condition of this time.

The Persistence of Expressionism

In the nineteen-fifties, a sudden change took place in expressionism, especially in graphics. One might say that this is in fact, the climax in the evolution of the current in Romania. It corresponds to a phenomenon which took place in the whole of Europe, where expressionist art — the German expressionism in the first place — was justly identified with the opposition to Nazism.

In Romanian graphics, the inclination towards using forms specific to expressionism was designed to emphasize the humanist ideas of the new historic epoch inaugurated after 1944. The artists who had compelled recognition before the war in militant graphics — *Aurel Jiquidi* (1896—1962),

Gy Szàbo Béla (1908—1985), the author in the 1930s of albums of engravings, some of which were inspired by the verse of Ernst Toller, *Aurel Mărculescu* (1900—1947), *Vasile Dobrian* (b. 1913), *Mihail Gion* (b.1912), *Vasile Kazar* — were joined by others who had devoted themselves to painting or easel graphics, or belonged to a generation that was making its debut as militant graphic artists. They were *Florica Cordescu* (1914—1965), *Gheorghe Ivancenco* (1914—1979), *Ligia Macovei* (b. 1916), *Marcela Cordescu*, *Aurel Stoicescu* (b.1921), *Iulian Olariu* (b. 1922).

The drawings of Ligia Macovei, often incisive, polemize with a world the artist abhors and, as a moral punishment, reduces it to a grotesque recalling the "Neue Sachlichkeit". In other drawings, representing mothers lovingly holding their babies in their arms, one can see the same delicate line, but the effect is competely different. Expressionism has not avoided this theme (the drawings made by Kaethe Kollwitz are proof thereof), but with Ligia Macovei the subject is instinct with a poesy no longer of the symbol but of the simple fact, rendered as it occurs in reality. The metaphor exists in real life, where the artist discovers it with a disarming simplicity.

Her painting is characterized by the same "bipolar" moral attitude. On the one hand we watch a solemn, stupid world which Ligia Macovei derides with sardonic ruthlessness, deriving as it were from Grosz, Dix and from the Romanians Vorel and Leon Alex; on the other hand sumptuous inflorescences exuberantly carnal, treated in an ample chromatics half way between fauvism and expressionism. It is a vital belief in the regenerating power of the organic world which connects the tradition of 19th century Romanian painting to the vision of the painters around "Der Blaue Reiter".

This vitalism is quite overwhelming with *Marcel Chirnoagă* (b. 1930). In order to fulfil his desire to build images conveying the feeling of force embedded in the visible universe as well as in the imaginary one, the artist experimented for a long time with the various techniques of etching. The result was his emphasis on a firm energetic line, on dynamic rhythms of black and white. With Chirnoagă the idea assumes the emblematic form of an allegory; a romantic synthesis is associated with the heraldic symbols present in the Early Renaissance.

His engravings *can be read* as if they were a text whose meanings are conveyed directly, vigorously underlined by the form which is defined with a sort of pathetic lucidity. The fundamental problems of the existence of man and of the species are treated with a specific inclination for the philosophical meditation and for asserting the responsibility of the artist in a world in which the hazards of the irrational have not been eliminated.

The graphical art of *Hortensia Masichievici* (b. 1917) has marked an unexpected evolution in this direction: after a very long period during which her repertory of images included pre-eminently metaphors of fruitfulness (fruits, seeds) and of the flight (butterfly wings), drawn in elegant lines, a recent exhibition shows different works based on signs of reason which expose hallucinations reminiscent of Piranesi's imagery — threatening beasts, immense octopuses, an entire threatening bestiary.

It is rather difficult to accept the inclusion of the engravings made by *Corina Bein* (b. 1919) within the sphere of expressionism. Her imagery, supported by a solid knowledge of the technique is extremely clear, contorsions, distorsions, grimaces, fright, find no place whatever in this rigorous construction. However, in certain recent engravings one can perceive an inclination towards turning to good account the age-old traditions of our

civilization, an abrupt simplification of form which can be interpreted as reflexes of expressionism.

As a matter of fact, there are many black-ar d-white artists whose work stands midway between expressionism and other directions of modern art. It is surrealism with *Nicolae Săftoiu* (b.1935) — the author of ample drawings, rigorously organized, with a free development of the line, in a vision which (not only because of his excellent illustrations for *The Divine Comedy*) have been felt to belong to a Dantesque vision —, with *Stan Done* (b.1937) — an excellent designer too combining a dramatic feeling with an intelligent humour — or with *Vintilă Făcăianu* (1936—1985).

With others, expressionism is a connecting element in a synthesis in which participate several modalities of structuring the image: *Imre Drocsay* (b. 1912) in whose work a classical monumentality prevails; *Clarette Wachtel* (b.1926), endowed with a romantic sense of the picturesque; *Eva Cerbu* (b. 1926) combining constructivist stylization with an intense chromatics and the exuberance peculiar to the folk narrative motifs; *Iosif Mátyas* (b. 1930) whose forms, moving freely inside a wide space, suggest an approach to the syntax of abstract art; *Vasile Socoliuc* (b. 1937), the author of images of great poetic meaning, adopting some of the refinement of aquatints and of the impressionist lithography .

Certain black-and-white artists who asserted themselves towards the end of the 1960s and in the following decade, believed expressionism was a modality able to enhance the vigour of an image and also to turn to good account the latent sensibility of the artist. Expressionism represented, at the time, a possible road to be followed in order to create a vision freed from the obsession of the naturalist mimetism so often present in the previous epoch. Their subsequent evolution seldom revealed memories of an expressionist period of formation; on the contrary, one might say that, with some of them, there followed a moment when they made every effort to eliminate the traces of this experience. It goes without saying that the separation from expressionism was not always the result of a programmatic decision. To many of them the expressionist syntax was a support for their activity in the new stylistic domain they approached. The sensitive analysis of form, with *Ala Jalea-Popa* (b.1924), the emblematic concentration with *Ladislau Feszt* (b. 1930), the surrealist inflexions with *Gustav Cseh* (b. 1934) the abstract reduction to the line, suggesting Hartung, in the engravings of *Rodica Chișu* (b. 1933), the balanced construction devoid of bombast, with *Iosif Tellman* (b. 1932) bear the mark — paradoxically at first sight — of a lesson learnt in a direct or mediated contact with expressionism.

How different the results of this lesson can be — a lesson serving sometimes only as a working hypothesis — is proved by the stylistic diversity of certain images created by artists in whose work echoes of this style — predominant two or three decades ago — are still discernible. (They are altered, of course, by the influence of other means of expression, more suitable to the temperament of the respective artists). *Ethel Lucaci-Băiaș* (b. 1936) is a convincing example: after a début showing her adhesion to expressionism, the artist moved in the direction of abstract art, constantly adopting this bipolar solution in her aspiration to capture the pure plastic sign. *Ștefan Iacobescu* (b.1937) has evolved an austere construction in which the real is his main source of inspiration; but he filters it through his lucid sensibility which endows his image with intense lyricism. With *Ion Panaitescu* (b. 1936) the visual acts as a factor of suggestion and bearer of poetic memories.

Damian Petrescu builds rational spaces imbued with a complex lyrical significance.

One can therefore note the presence of a permanent rationalist vein in the Romanian graphics today. Even in the expressionist creations, the painful contorsions, the outbursts of a soul torn by the spectacle of a crooked world expressed a polemic with the social and political irrationality of the '60s, '70s and '80s. More often than not, the aspiration to universal equity, to social and moral justice is expressed in such a way as to throw light on fundamental values, on the belief in the destiny of the country. Classicism is not a stylistic solution but a philosophical hope.

The phenomenon is even more significant when it takes place inside a formula which, by its very nature, could imply the rejection of any organizing intervention — i.e. abstract expressionism. Identified with the art of pure sensation, this stylistic solution would mean an extension of perception; in many cases, people have overlooked the principle Mattis-Teutsch clearly expounded in his book *Ideology of Art* as far back as 1931: art is justified only as the expression of certain states of moods which affect the deep layers of conscience and organizes them function of the rigorous logic of coloured forms. At a time when the principles of mimetic art were prevalent in Romanian criticism, Mattis-Teutsch's principles were a real support for the young artists who felt drawn to more complex modalities of establishing logical relationships with the visual universe. A "school of Brașov" was mentioned at a certain moment, evolving in the sense of the ideas of the artist who connected the significance of constructivism and abstract art with his moods. Of his former disciples some thirty years ago, the most faithful to the model created by the master is *Emilia Apostolescu* (b.1927) the author of compositions whose unifying principles are the harmonious rhythm of geometries, the synthetic construction, the logical reduction of chromatics.

Wanda Sachelarie-Vladimirescu (b. 1916) is an important representative of this direction. Her work was thought to belong to fauvism rather than to expressionism, because it does not evince a dramatic and troubled consciousness of existence but an intensity and exaltation of colour and line which become exuberant. A precise sense of the organization of surfaces lends equilibrium to her compositions: the energetic impulses do not impress upon forms a centrifugal movement and, the less so, chaotic displacement. On the contrary, the structures are held together by the rigorous logic of the relation between the world the artist sees, the world she feels and the world she represents.

The art of *Eugen Popa* (b. 1918) is closely related to the syntax of abstract expressionism (in certain works of action painting). It is true that the vision of this artist can hardly be integrated into a particular current for an extraordinary stylistic know-how underlies his endeavours in various domains of expression. All of them are solved with the same impressive courage, force of organization of the image and virtuosity in the service of a plastic idea: Eugen Popa does not try to discover new forms for the sake of innovation, on the contrary, he skilfully establishes the accord of theme and image. It happened that during the same stage of his evolution he should resort to various stylistic solutions. Yet his diversity is a consequence of a widened thematic horizon, and the themes in their turn are united by the painter's desire to comprehend the various aspects of contemporary human reality.

Eugen Popa was, for a few years, professor at the Art Academy in Bejing; the consequences of this unique experience are to be seen in his engravings more especially. He has derived from Chinese art his ability to reduce the image to the calligraphical sign, firm and subtle. Like the artists of the West Coast School for instance (though they could not have influenced him for the artist went direct to the source), Popa does not belong to abstract expressionism, for his art does not spring from an "inward necessity", but it is based on the analysis of a fragment of real nature.

Neither can *Ion Pacea* (b.1924) be defined exclusively as an abstract painter: he is simultaneously attracted by two apparently opposed stylistic modalities, figurative art holding as important a place with him as abstract compositions. Colour is the element which secures the unity of his work; Pacea is one of the great colourists of present-day Romanian painting. Some time in the 1960s his solutions were based on a severe simplification of form, coming from folk art. The folk carpet has opened up for him a comprehensive prospect regarding the flat form achieved with the help of a pure colour scheme. He then evolved in the direction of an ever more refined decantation of colour; the chromatic effect, however, is not produced independently of the significances of the form which stem from the real object which gives them shape. There is in Pacea's landscapes a certain amount of poesy peculiar to the painting of de Staël. Some art critics exaggerated, in our opinion, when they associated *Ion Gheorghiu*'s (b.1929) early works exclusively with icons on glass and with enameled folk ceramics. Without rejecting this filiation, any careful analysis of the painting of this colourist proves how complex his vision is, how powerful his sense of construction, how strict the logic of his chromatic harmonies. His art is consistently marked by the rational: chance of the mere wish to create chromatic harmonies pleasant to the eye are not the main characteristic of his painting. Everything is emblematic: the corolla of the flower, the hanging garden, the petal with a fantastic aspect, the wide-open inflorescence capturing the light. The sculptures he has executed in recent years are not relief projections of his own paintings as they look at first sight. They pose complex problems concerning the implantation in space and clearly show the organicist conception of the artist, suggesting strange plants, worlds where the corollas look like suns round which all visible objects rotate.

Ion Nicodim (b. 1932) has created a work with a different type of symbols. In his painting, the object is reduced to its essence, it becomes a sign, a spot of intense colour, whose relation with the motif is either allusive or metaphorical. His vision has gradually evolved towards a system of connotations which are constructed in the same manner as with the emblematic artists of the Middle Ages. At present the dominant sign of his painting is *the heart* (also to be found in sculptures of a disarming simplicity), the form in which the senses of the whole universe are embedded and which becomes the star governing the movements of the world. Nicodim is a highly refined colourist; to him reality appears to be a space in which everything — objects, air, light and shadow — means colour. He is also the author of vast tapestries (one of them *Song to Man* is to be found at the UN Building in New York) in which the narrative is subjected to successive pictorial decantations until it becomes a metaphor.

With *Gheorghe Anghel* (b.1938) as well it is difficult to establish the borderline between the figurative and the abstract. The landscape, the narra-

tive composition are interpreted as bearers of poetic significances the painter translates into chromatic constructions securing their equilibrium with his clever insight into the optic and psychological effect. Modest Morariu, the main exegete of Anghel's painting has noted the "essentially classic calm" of his work and has come to the following conclusion justified by the fine quality of the painter's artistic ideas: "Purged of the naturalist anecdote, but preserving the suggestions of reality, his forms and spaces offer a spiritual territory in images whose poetic tension determines the expression of sensibility and, at long last, its adhesion." Anghel is a rationalist painter in his attitude; colour with him is not merely the expression of a mood or state of mind, but the element of a long worked out construction.

The exhibition of 1985 in which the works of *Silviu Oraviţan* (b. 1941) were on show was a revelation indeed for many people; before that date his work had been on view only in some national salons; only a few critics knew it all. The retrospective exhibition of 1985 proved that, in certain respects, Oraviţan had anticipated (already in the 1970s) some stylistic solutions of abstract expression which asserted itself later owing to other artists. *Vladimir Streletz* (b.1942) has made a name for himself by his one-man exhibition held in 1986. The transparent forms move freely, defying gravitation as it were; they suggest calm landscapes possessing some of Michaux's poetry, of Soulages' and of the Romanian painter Pacea.

The dramatic vision of *Teodor Moraru* (b. 1938) made art critics discover in his work an expressionist abstract understatement. His structures are telluric, they seem to combine the organic, growth , subterranean beings with the hard articulations of the metal, into a fantastic synthesis suggesting the dreams of a human being overwhelmed by the life of the earth. The specific virtue of the calligrams in the painting of *Florin Ciubotaru* (b.1939) is not only "the satisfaction of exigences on the decorative plane" — as it was described; nor does the organization of space in the vast tapestry — designed with *Şerban Gabrea* for the modern building of the Bucharest National Theatre — in which these signs are so frequent prove his ability to construct. The signs suggest a fabulous or magic alphabets coming from the distant beginningsof human civilization. Graphic artist *Nistor Coita* (b.1943) uses the same strange alphabets to convey the message of his works whose calligraphy are genuine confessions to be decoded, about the artist himself.

With *Ion Bitzan* too, a polymorphous spirit himself, calligraphy is a modality of exteriorizing interior space; his objects are often books he binds, as it were, with the minute art of the Renaissance printers, books which contain only unitelligible texts. As critic Constantin Prut puts it, the objects Bitzan creates deny their concrete condition in order to describe spiritual realities. His boxes conceal the grain of beauty emerging from the depth of the subconscious. There is nothing in them of the tragical vanity of Christo's packages: the boxes of the Romanian artist, executed with the minute skill of the artisan, open on to mysteries which enter our daily universe and humanizes it.

This is also, in a way, the meaning of the objects in the painting of *Horia Bernea* (b. 1938). Related in its conception to the archaic symbolism — of the kind Marin Gherasim practises — Bernea's painting is the result of a great coherent effort which some fifteen years ago, endeavoured to express the significance of our immediate reality. In 1972, Bernea organized an exhibition where several paintigs, colour drawings, a plan of the whole place and photos of a hill in a Transylvanian village were on show; it was not a

return to the motif but an identification with a state of mind, a mood; preserving its identity, the landscape was imbued with an obvious *Einfühlung*, with the sensibility of the painter. The Hill at "Poiana Mărului" has become an emblem, a symbol of a specific type of interpretation of the landscape, in which the emotional content is rendered in the shape of a real object without any change whatever, making it more rigorous and more dramatic. A group of landscape painters "of the Poiana Mărului" has appeared; their conclusions differ, no doubt, but they derive from the same programme establishing the purely pictorial character of reality.

When, in 1985, Bernea opened an exhibition in which the main themes were the banners carried in the processions of the old sacred ceremonies of the Romanians, the style he had evolved in 1972 changed completely: the image, concentrated in an emblem conveyed the spiritual significances of the relationship between man and eternity. Under the sign of duration, Bernea meditates on the destiny of a whole people.

Șerban Gabrea (b. 1941) conveys into a play of imagination the expressive virtues of the sign; the apparent spontaneous lay-out is a refined commentary of the form which reminds us of the powerful lines of Hartung and of the subtle Oriental calligraphies, as well. The vast symbols — as O. Barbosa noticed — reveal the deep dimensions of the soul.

Cristian Paraschiv (b. 1953) has evolved from conceptual art to a study of human body, which was seen in "a permanent confrontation of two beings that is the image of life itself" (Ionel Jianou).

Corneliu Vasilescu (b. 1934) followed a different path and turned to action painting; the space he has created runs parallel with the real one, but the organization of the image is achieved with traditional means, a coloured paste laid on canvas or cardboard. *Vladimir Șetran* felt drawn towards the same type of abstract construction. However, this artist, so responsive to the various modalities of expression he explored with the same aplomb, did not devote himself invariably to it. *Gheorghe Șaru* (b. 1920) considered abstract expressionism a stage only in his continuous development. Without giving up the examination of the specific function of line and colour, in an effort to achieve a synthesis between the organic and the inorganic organized through the complex geometry of architecture, his art represented — in the mid-nineteen-sixties — the encounter of two archaic traditiions: the traditon of the pre-Roman civilization on the territory of Romania and that of Aztec culture (the painter was just back from a travel to Mexico). From the representation of forms in relief, he has come to kinetic experiments meant to throw *stone* into relief.

Ștefan Râmniceanu (b. 1953) started from a expressionistic view which could be called "an intense sentimental *Einfühlung*": he has soon moved to vast images obviously inspired from the old Romanian icons. In a 1989 show he exhibited a large installation which suggested the sacred tradition of the church culture.

Francois Pamfil (b.1940), an artist with a thorough artistic and philosophical culture, considers the exploration of the various domains of modern art a matter of professional etchics: he does not adopt any stylistic solution before investigating them in all their consequences. Pamfil is concerned in equal measure with the meanings of tradition; as already noted, there is a continuity of vision between his engravings and paintings executed with traditional means of expression and those belonging to *op* or kinetic art, a continuity which expresses an organic growth, not a break.

The same occurs, to a larger extent, in the work of *Constantin Flondor* (b.1936). As is often the case with artists possessing a sytematically built culture, his adhesion to the ideas of modern art does not imply any rejection of traditional solutions. He has proved it in his exhibitions called "Prelude" whose programme was the systematic study of motifs taken from nature. Flondor has achieved a synthesis whose main element is *the character* of the object. As a matter of fact, he is one of the artists who initiated — at Timișoara — the series of exhibitions called "Study", devoted to the specific analysis of the forms of reality. Flondor has carried out a research into the concordances between space and time. He has adopted elements of op art and of kinetic art without, for that matter, adhering to any of them; on the contrary — by introducing a ruled glass screen — he reveals the direction of the movement and defines the unlimited character of space. The on-looker becomes part of the work, the same as, in an architectural space, his moving (from place to place) changes the perspective over and over again and helps him rediscover new combinations of details.

The "Sygma" group founded in the mid-nineteen-sixties in Timișoara on the initiative of psychiatrist Eduard Pamfil and of several artists from Flondor's generation, was very active preparing a programme for the creation of logical relations between the possible combinations of signs and the ordered arrangement of the urban ambient space. The problem has been resumed by other artists as well who are interested in prospective explorations; however, at least for the time being, such explorations are not resumed by architects as often as they should be.

Wanda Mihuleac (b. 1946) proposes a different type of commentary on and remodelling of space. After having compelled recognition by her engravings of great constructive force, the artist turned her attention to a vision implying both constructivism and the permanent features of tradition. The simple material of her montages — wood, clods, sand, grass — convey a warm atmosphere and urge one to meditate on the existence of modern man. Her exhibitions — performances, in which dance, music, and lighting effects participate, show a consistent programme designed to reveal the inter-relation between arts. *Alexandru Chira* (b. 1947) shows an interest in the projective states of man's consciousness, which he tries to capture in metaphorical images where the line holds pride of place; he also approaches domains which seemed to be reserved only for the conceptual transcriptions of poetry.

One can notice in recent years a certain reserve of many young artists as to the varied forms of abstract art. Its most consistent representatives are those who belong to older generations: *Vasile Brătulescu* (1916—1981) drew on underwater seascapes, with their sand and mud stirred by the water, with the metallic body of fish darting through it, with strange flowers and weeds shrouded in a mysterious light. The artist added long strips of mirror reflecting and multiplying this mirific world. *Teodor Dan* (1917—1981) passed from a realistic synthetic syntax to an abstract poetics in which coloured forms draw near, then part or become superposed in broad, subtly equilibrated rhythms. The painting of *Virgil Popa* (b.1917) is situated midway between constructivism and abstractionism, the principle he observes being the translation of musical harmony into colour. *Vlad Florescu* (1923—1986), an artist possessing the vast culture of a museologist, a refined colourist, had an adequate sense of the construction by means of colour, of the chromatic modulations which make up a unitary ensemble and communicate a calm poesy. With *Mihai*

Horea (b.1926) these transitions constitute — the same as with Ad Reinhardt — the very substance of painting. The artist started from the lesson of Mattis-Teutsch, but he reinterpreted the example of his master in the sense of a drastic limitation of his palette; his austere images convey a subtle lyrical warmth.

In fact, the present-day tendencies of Romanian constructivism are hardly connected with Mattis-Teutsch's conceptions, which exerted such a strong influence on painting some two or three decades ago. In the first place it is rather difficult to speak of a unitary orientation: if the mathematical laws of space, colour and volume represent the common substance, the interpretation and, of course, the results are different. With *Mihai Olos* (b.1940), for instance, constructivism means the introduction of strong materials — metal, wood — but in a sort of prolonged *happening*, he also introduces ephemeral materials — paper for instance: joy derives from the *manufacturing* of an object and not necessarily from its *contemplation.*

Besides paintings which remind one of the coloured geometrical constructions of Iosef Aibers or Frank Stella, *Florin Maxa* (b.1943) has created installations in which his works move slightly in the wind, conveying an impression of calm, a cordial atmosphere. The paintings of *Liviu Stoicoviciu* (b. 1942) belong to the traditional geometrism of Vasarhely between 1950 and 1960, while those of *Iosef Krijanowski* (b. 1936) combine the geometrical simplifications of form with a quiet colouring and certain recognizable motifs, taken from reality, portraits more especially.

Another artist which has explored the world of mathematics and its relations with artistic expression is *Adina Caloenescu* (b. 1934). Her art is not just a new projection of constructivist solutions, but a rational investigation of geometry and its aesthetic values.

On the other hand *pop* art, which in other countries was the answer — sonetimes sarcastic, at other times pathetic — to this conflict, has few echoes in Romania. Although the modification of the predominant cultural structures took place concomitantly with the transition from the rural traditions to the specific forms of urban civilization, no dramatic oppositions occurred between technology and humanist culture, characteristic of other zones of modern culture. The experiments in this direction — in Romanian art — are exercises in style rather than attitudes of people exasperated with the possible invasion of technology which impairs originality and creates standardized products.

Painter *Vitalie Nereuță* (b. 1924) and sculptor *Filofteia Simionescu* (b. 1926) had both on show, in an exhibition organized in the early 1970s, a group of coloured moulds which were not meant to represent an ironical attitude to the stereotypes of consummer civilization; they showed the artists' desire to "play at nature and with nature". In his turn *Romul Nuțiu* (b.1932) experimented with the pictorial effects of coloured objects; but he adopted almost nothing of the forms of *pop:* objects are the elements of an attempt to revaluate forms and then relationships with space.

Hyperrealism has been convincingly illustrated during the last ten years by several artistes. The most important participants in the very strict programme of this movement, *Ion Dumitriu* (b.1942) or *Ion Grigorescu* (b.1945) do not accept the item in its programmes proclaiming total objectivity. Realizing that such an attitude is illusory, Dumitriu believes that this style enables the artist to rediscover reality in its details, a reality *very close to his heart.* His paintings describe a simple, quiet world, peasant

courtyards, hay wains, old gates executed with the meticulous attention of the man familiar with these places and objects so eloquently poetic. Quite recently, the artist has started analysing matter itself, wood with its circles recalling the tangible passage of time.

The attitude of Ion Grigorescu is utterly polemical. The image with him is not only a *competitor* of the photo but also its *collaborator* in a consistent attempt to substitute a work which *does not want* to be a painting for the system of illusive relations painting implies. No matter the means he uses, the artist endows the image with obvious pictorial virtues making it deliberately ambiguous.

In the last few years, the exhibitions in which the young artists manifestly call in question the traditional means of expression have become more and more frequent. Although their arguments are not new, the fact is still symptomatic: photographic selfportraits in convex mirrors, photos representing the artist crouching at the bottom of a hole, successive photos of the stages of the digging of a ditch, all of them are but a few modalities by means of which the young artists claim they want to capture the whole reality of daily activities. Adding to them the "objets trouvés" like those made once by Marcel Duchamp or Man Ray, these works show the desire to stress the importance of the simple objects which enable us to get acquainted with the world in a direct way; their intervention is direct, although the motif is rendered apparently without any commentary: in fact, the commentary is implied in the very motif of the work.

The same as with other similar works (those for instance on show at the "Documenta" exhibitions repeatedly organized at Kassel), the selection of the angle of perspective of the photo results in oversized objects or in their deformations, wich proves how subjective the process is. One of the promoters of these exhibitions is the graphic artist Radu Igaszag: with him conceptualization implies the insertion of elements designed to show the identity between the plastic sign and the motif existing in nature.

Ample exhibitions devoted to special themes have thrown light on the various modalities of interpenetration between visual arts and the modern humanistic disciplines, semiotics for instance; such an exhibition concentrated on *the script*, viewed as the reflection of man's attitude, all along history, to himself and to his environment. Other exhibitions, though more limited and with fewer philosophical implications, *mail-art*, for instance, have revealed a certain anxiety of artists, most of them young, and their desire to use new elements of language.

Innovation and Tradition

A general characteristic of these experiments is that they are seldom meant to deny tradition. In the painting of *Paul Gherasim* (b. 1935) or *Ștefan Sevastre* (b. 1926) the coloured image evolves a syntax and system of rules faithful to the strict lesson of tradition; this can be easily perceived in the chromatic harmony and the organization of the optic space.

Paul Gherasim was very young when in 1957 — together with two colleagues of the same generation, *Constantin Crăciun* (b.1928) and Virgil

Almăşanu — he executed a composition which the dogmatic critique of the time branded, accusing it of deviating from the principles of realism compressed at the time within very rigid limits. A severe simplification of Byzantine essence at first — has been carried to its extremes by the painter until he has reached a drastic expressionist purification in which the critics have discovered something of the spiritual character specific to the simple architecture of the medieval vaulting system. It is rather risky to compare him with Albers and Itten as conceptualization with them had an aesthetic aim, while with the Romanian artist it is based on a philosophical vision.

Of late, Paul Gherasim has initiated the organization of exhibitions which lay emphasis on the significances of the real object (two exhibitions have been opened so far under the name of "Preludium"). They do not represent a departure from his former concerns but the continuity of a programme implying lucidity as a factor which reveals and organizes form.

Sevastre — as already said — rigorously sticks by pictorial form. He too started from a poetic interpretation of the real image, to evolve in the direction of Kenneth Noland rather than Albers as it was suggested. He has remained faithful to this modality, being one of the best known representatives of Romanian contemporary constructivism, in the sense of a synthesis of chromatic sensibility and compositional organization in which geometrical form often suggests the symbol.

Academism played an important part in the professional training of *Petre Achiţenie* (b. 1929). The painter went through a period of searching for a style suited to his temperament which has proved to be receptive to more flexible modalities of rendering colour. He subsequently adopted a rigorous syntax, introducing the elements of a constructivism which uses photos as well, in successions meant to suggest the dynamism of the modern world.

As far as sculpture is concerned, the innovations of its language have been facilitated by the research work carried on under the influence of Brâncuşi's work, rediscovered little before the death of the great artist. Some of the most important representatives of modern sculpture have followed their own path to reach the forms characteristic of the last decades of the 20th century. Ion Irimescu is one of them. Faithful to a figurative interpretation, he lends the portrait a cordial monumentality, the result of his research in the domain of expressive deformations. Irimescu has created symbolic portraits, in which the monument evoking tragical social events leaves its pathetic stamp, unexpected in a work significant particularly on account of its power to dominate and control impulses, romantic according to some critics.

The attempts to find a place for *Paul Vasilescu* (b.1936) in some particular zone of modern world art have failed. Even during the years of his training as a sculptor, he was a solitary, no affinity could be noticed with the important artists of the previous epoch or with his contemporaries. It was said that his work establishes the connection between the antithetic classical and Baroque arts. He brings together in fact several essential antitheses of modern art with the ease of a creator in control of his means of expression; the broad romantic modelling of his monumental sculptures, the harmonious discontinuity of the volume, in a vitalist interpretation of the concrete and the geometrical rigour of the metal rhythmically enphasizing light, meet in a creation which endeavours to give a significant answer to the essential questions of the modern epoch.

Neither can *Mircea Spătaru* (b.1938) be classified according to any peculiar current. The monuments to historic personalities are interpreted with a romantic pathos while his intense spiritual participation turns the entire sculpture into a symbol of great loftiness. Other works by the same artist, belonging to an environmental poetics, are inspired by modern technology. With him the moulds made of plastics are not an expression of the polemics with the invasion of technology — as they were, with Oldenburg; on the contrary, they are part of a demonstration of the basic truth that aesthetic joy can arise from forms and ensembles of forms irrespective of the material they are made of.

In like manner, his colleague *Constantin Popovici* (b. 1938) cannot be considered to belong to any trend of world art. This is not due to the changes occuring in his vision and techniques but rather to the fact that, in each of its hypostases, his art is placed where different stylistic areas meet. The grotesque of *Chimeras* and of *Scarecrows* is only partly a specific projection of expressionism; it is at the same time the result of an interpretation descending from Goya, and of a rationalist attitude opposing any monster bred by a slothful thinking. His portraits demonstrate his sensibility, an accurate psychological understanding expressed by a broad modelling coming from Bourdelle one might say, while the emblematic monument to the *Electrification*, rising high on the barrage of one of the great hydropower stations of the country is a simple construction classical in its majesty.

The aim of the sculpture of *Leonard Răchită* (b. 1952) is, according to his own statement, "to discover the architecture of the human being, of the leaf, the cloud and the smoke"; the artist is looking for the structure in all moving forms of reality, for the hidden meaning of matter. *Nicolae Fleissig* (b. 1948) is an excellent carver in marble, the evolution of his art pointing clearly to a simple and vital form as opposed to the outwardly more complex organic development. *Liana Axinte* (b. 1943) is directing her sculpture to a daring reinterpretation of the visual appearances of reality, translating them into abstract signs, while her masks for various theatre shows have proved themselves as good opportunities to demonstrate a powerful imagination, candid and witty.

Constantin Lucaci (b. 1923) approached the clear and rigorous forms created by industry as early as the nineteen-sixties, after he had acquired the experience of working with a very hard material at the time when he felt attracted by the syntax of the figurative. As the hardness of the material obliged him to express himself in a concise, lapidary way, Lucaci, naturally adopted the essentialized form of his present sculptures, made from a metal he polished until it seems to be transparent or to change into a mirror reflecting the world surrounding him like in a mirrored play. The reference to the real object reveals his departure from constructivism — in the manner of Gabo — and his approaching the Brâncușian semantics. His artesian wells demonstrate both his through knowledge of technique and the force of his imagination.

Since the 1940s, when he was very young, *Horia Damian* (b. 1922) has been recognized by the critique as one of the most powerful personalities of his generation. His one-person show in 1942, in Bucharest, revealed the purity of forms and the rigour of colours, the intransigency of the whole construction. Twenty years later, at his exhibition at the Galerie Stadler, as Ionel Jianou remembers, Damian "was clearly showing the unseen face

of things, the deep truth, the absolute equity, the unspeakable of the surreal". The geometric rigour, the clarity and simplicity of the *Pyramides*, "these receptacles of eternity", were telling signs of a thirst for the Absolute. As for his *Thrones*, the outstanding Romanian critic Petru Comarnescu has found their strong relation with the mystic majesty of Byzantine art. His *Galaxies* and *Hills*, the project for *The City of Alexandre*, or the *Column* in the city of St. Denis bear the same fundamental characters of Damian's art: Mediterranean geometric clarity that is defining the formes amplitude of the composition, luminosity of colours, monumental vision, irreducible will to translate the invisible into images.

Paul Neagu (b. 1938) is always searching for new forms of expression and a new conception of art. Starting from a radical negation of a Dada origin, he wants to inaugurate a new way of understanding the art. The critique has pointed out his spirit of adventure "which opens wide avenues to every daring solution, from that of comestible or palpable sculptures to the cosmic aspirations of the *Stars* series". On his arrival in England in 1969 he launched *The Palpable Art Manifesto* which tried to justitfy the happenings he had planned and in which he had used bread slices and honeycombs which had to be eaten by the spectators; he wanted to oppose the avant-garde forms such as body-art, performance art and even the conceptual art. Paul Neagu has surpassed his own theories and his work reveals an excellent knowledge of form and a consistent wish to enlighten the deep strata of conscience, the memories of his ancestors, peasants of the yesteryear.

There are few noteworthy achievements in the environmental art, although the orientation of a large enough number of artists in the direction of forms which need a space with which to cooperate in creating a specific atmosphere, demonstrates the significant change occurring in the art of volumes. Architect *Paul Bortnovschi* (b. 1922), for instance, one of the most representative scenographers, has realized an ensemble in which sculpture and architecture cooperate in turning the environment to advantage. Originating in an expressionist vision with *Alexandru Brețcanu* (b. 1933) or in a well balanced realism, with *Ana Cordoneț* (b. 1925), certain kinetic compositions have marked an interesting moment in the life of the respective artists rather than in the development of the genre in Romanian art as a whole.

More radical — although, apparently closer to the tradition of the stone cutters in archaic civilization than to the solutions of modern technology — the sculptures of *Napoleon Tiron* (b. 1935) suggest the reintegration of the natural into the environment to which it belongs. The artist has recently organized an exhibition in which huge human beings were made of bits of wood, resembling some gigantic skeletons from a remote legendary world. The stylization of the form made of stone and the polishing of its surface until the coarse grain becomes smooth, as if polished by the wind or by flowing waters, with *Gheorghe Coman* (b. 1925); the reduction of the metal form to an almost graphic sign, with *Wilhelm Demeter* (b. 1936) or with *Lehel Domokos* (b. 1945); the carving of wood in broad planes suggesting, with *Victor Gaga* (b. 1930) forms of the ancient Romanian civilization, all of them are influenced by Brâncuși's art. Even in certain figurative sculptures — with *Dan Covătaru* (b. 1944), for instance — the constructivist vigour does not atenuate the lyrical character. Neither does it with *Ștefan Kancsura* (b. 1941) who made his début as a figurative sculptor, gradually adopting a constructive vision which includes both geometrical rationality and organic suggestion, lending a deep sense to the objects.

The poesy of matter rings loud in the work of *Mihai Buculei* (b. 1940), whose sculptures in stone demonstrate his ability to lend a metaphorical sense to the sculptural mass, without however eliminating completely the figurative allusion. Lyricism is also to be found in many of the vigorous sculptures made by *Pavel Bucur* (b. 1945), or of the sculptures made by *Előd Kocsis* (b. 1948), whose vocation for the construction of finely stylized volumes can favourably assert itself in metal sculpture.

The attraction of artists — most of them young, though not only the young ones — for metal sculpture is demonstrated by the ample annual exhibitions devoted to the genre. Metal sculpture is markedly constructivist, although there are works which do not strictly belong to this current. Telling examples are the statues situated on the cliff of the port of Galați, a centre of iron and steel industry; several monumental statues worked in metal, which enhance the grandeur of the townscape have been set here along the years.

Peter Balogh (b. 1920) is one of the sculptors who, twenty years ago, prepared the favourable atmosphere for the development of sculpture in metal: he was one of the first to treat bronze *as metal*, not as the ultimate form modelled clay assumes. His sculptures, suggesting groups of human figures, can grace some interior or become monumental compositions. In this respect, the work of *Grigore Minea* (b. 1940) is obviously similar to that of Balogh, although, stylistically speaking, it is quite different. Well versed in the expressive virtues of each material, Minea never gives the impression of paroxistic contractions, and his deviations from classical norms affect the morphology not the ensemble of the composition. The sculptures of *Ingo Glass* (b. 1941), one of the artists who have taken initiative in planning this permanent exhibition, is a solid geometry, almost non-material, subtle, replacing the balance of volumes by the equilibrium of forces.

Misled for a time by the form of the sculpture cultivated by *Silvia Radu* (b. 1935) the critics were tempted to consider it expressionistic. This, because the artist simplifies the portrait creating a generic image, a kind of emblematic *sign*. When Silvia Radu added colour as well, her approach to sculpture became clear: it is based on a reinterpretation — a poetic blend of humour, tragism and lyricism — of the archaic art of Greece. The strong and subtle modelling endows Silvia Radu's art with a characteristic force and gracefulness. *Maria Cocea* (b. 1935) has reached the same preclassical expression, by other means and with different conclusions. She started from the example Early Gothic with volumes which do not purport to dominate space, but to render, in specific forms, the simple elegance of the medieval illuminated manuscripts. The transformation of her vision was misleading: her refined carving with its velvety effects has been replaced by deliberate grotesque touches, perishable materials have taken the place of stone, making the metaphor conjure up something of the attitude of the primitive civilizations for which the joy of creation resides in the *making* not in *durability*.

Seldom present in Romanian sculpture today, the influence of the Gothic is still not negligible at all. It can be detected in the symbolic meanings of the "windows" carved by Buculei — severe and cordial at one and the same time — whose proportions are the same as those of Romanian mediaeval architecture. It is also to be found in the work of *Mihai Meiu* (b. 1938—1989) where it is in harmony with the historical subject. In both cases it establishes a relationship between art and old stylistic traditions. In this respect, the hieratic character of the work of *Mircea Ștefănescu* (b. 1929) is a landmark, for it introduces the example of medieval art in a work where materiality and

robustness meet a subtle finesse in the treatment of volumes. *Dumitru Pasima* (b. 1935), a subtle portraitist, was sometimes considered a bearer of impressionist conceptions; in fact his frank and funny stylized sculptures are closely related to the Romanian folk woodcuts in the Late Renaissance. The humour of *EugenGocan* (b. 1938) retains something of the *bonhomie* in the folk paintings of the Middle Ages, while *Andràs Kos* (b. 1914) interprets the mediaeval style in the manner of the German and Austrian Neo-Gothic art at the beginning of the 20th century. More complex in the syntax of the painting of *Ioan Deac-Bistrița* (b. 1940), which possesses some of the austere majesty of the stones carved by peasant stonecutters and placed at the crossroads during the Middle Ages. A work difficult to interpret in point of style belongs to *Neculai Păduraru* (b. 1944) whose rich imagination breeds creatures descending both from the mediaeval bestiaries and from Bosch's surrealist projections.

Vladimir Predescu (b. 1928), who has a very good command of carving, has evolved in the direction of an archaic simplification of forms. *Gabriela Manole Adoc* (b. 1926) — who together with her husband *Gheorghe Adoc* (b. 1926), has executed imposing figurative monuments — has resorted to metal in order to suggest the accord between form, which has become almost transparent, and the natural environment where it is placed. *Radu Aftenie* (b. 1936) "reads" the ancestral forms in metaphors, while with *Aurelian Bolea* (b. 1940), the relationships with folk art are rather poetic, so that critics correctly find in his work certain reflexes of the chaste eroticism in folk tales. Of folk origin too — this time hailing from anecdotes and merry tales — are the personages of *Alexandru Benczedi* (b. 1912) with their amusingly grotesque aspect.

One has noticed in the works of *Elena Hariga* (b. 1940) and *Manuela Siclodi* (b. 1941) the complex assimilation of certain syntheses in which the material matches the temperament of the two artists and is suited to the subject as well. A permanent feature is the suggestion of vestiges of an age-old civilization.

The personality of *Ioana Kassargian* (1933—1985) assumed a definite shape early enough; this is due her perfect skill in the treatment of various styles, to her facility in the chiselling of various materials — stone, marble, bronze. A pupil of Medrea she learnt from this great master a robust treatment of volumes, in a personal reinterpretation of Bourdelle's style. Expressionism — which was often mentioned in connection with her work — has few tangencies with the musical harmony of forms, her most obvious characteristic feature.

In the work of *Doru Covrig* (b. 1942), there are two complementary tendencies: the first, supported by a purity of forms, by an aspiration to abstraction; the other, directed toward a primal world of forms, through a new meaning of assemblages and surfaces. A deep knowledge of the tradition of sculpture, of its techniques and materials, it was noticed, was a decisive condition for implementing these major aims. His bronze sculptures made between 1977 and 1982 are inspired by various religious objects, directly related with the Byzantine tradition of the Greek-Orthodox church. The giant wood anthropomorphic sculptures, the constrast between Nature and Reality rebuilt by the artist is strongly supported by a surprising change of optical balance: he uses pieces of wood of various colours, so that the surface plays an important role in the perception of the whole.

The persistence of anthropomorphous representations in contemporary Romanian sculpture deserves to be mentioned. With *Valentina Boştină* (b. 1940) the sometimes dramatic or graceful simplifications of form do not go beyond the borders of the figurative. Free from the hazards of the picturesque which the direct assimilation of folklore elements entails, *Laurenţiu Mihail* (b. 1935) simplifies the human form to be able to place it in the environment of modern life. *Adrian Popovici* (b. 1943) uses stylizations which do not contradict the figurative form; yet the form is so concentrated that the volume acquires the plastic value of an independent structure. *Dinu Rădulescu* preserves the fragile equilibrium between the architectural form and the sculptural structure, in an intellectual vision which opposes any stereotype.

Ion Vlad (b. 1920) is one of the most prominent personalities of the Romanian sculpture in the post-war years. Since his first one-person show in Bucharest (1947) the critique has noticed his intellectual anxiety, his power to capture the invisible movements of Nature in monumental material structures. All along these forty years, the artist has been searching for a meaningful synthesis of forms.

The main character of Vlad's art is its vitality; as Ionel Jianou said once, an inner force animates these forms. The artist re-discovers his deep roots in the direct, authentic, ancestral relations of man with nature. The sculptures in bronze get a vivid rhythm of fulls and voids, a dramatic vibration, a plenitude of close volumes. His stone pieces seem to come from immemorial times; they are carved by winds and rains, while the wood sculptures preserve the original sap of the tree. Vlad's work is telluric and powerful, animated by the spirit of Earth.

There are many sculptors who, despite their researches in various styles, do not depart from the essential principles of the figurative. *Bela Crişan* (b. 1943) borders on neo-dadaism, by using materials without an avowed sculptural function (leather, for instance) and placing sometimes, like in a farce, a polished metal plate to reflect the face of the on-looker instead of the face of the personage. Others — *Vasile Aciobăniţei* (b. 1924), *Constantin Foamete* (b. 1932), *Nicolae Kruch* (b. 1932), *Grigore Patrichi* (b. 1937) — concentrate on the portrait, investigating its expressive power within the figurative. An example in this respect is the work of *Iulia Oniţă* (1923—1987): consistently representing the human figures, she rejected imitation, dwelling on characteristic features, turning the portrait into an effigy. *Naum Corcescu* (b. 1922—1989) was an artist who created ample, energetic forms, suited to monumental art. The powerful modelling, the tragical feeling, the dignified attitude of personages are the main traits of composition in which a realistic syntax acquires romantic inflections. *Izsak Martin* (b. 1913) started from the realistic vision of the schools of sculpture in Central Europe concerned with a powerful emphasis of form; he then evolved drastic simplifications suited however to his desire to define the volume carved in a realistic way. *Emil Mereanu* (b. 1903) dealt for a long time with realistic interpretations, characterized by a classical cadence of rhythms; in his most recent works one can discern a modern syncretism in which the form of a sculpture becomes the petrified hypostasis of music. *Iftimie Birleanu* (1916—1986) was faithful all his life to deeply realistic principles; his relationships with folk art are reflected in their narrative and moral significance, rather than in the manner of treating form.

Masters and Disciples

One of the most important traits of the Romanian artistic creation in the last few decades is the continuity of an ethical attitude to art rather than of aesthetic principles. The innovations in point of vision and expression are not due to the negation of the previous stages, but to their integration into a complex synthesis. The Romanian artists have always had a historical perspective of their work: they have manifested an insight into the specific values created within the Romanian traditional culture.

Continuity in art occurs all over the territory of Romania. The generations of painters who have won recognition beginning with the nineteen-sixties for instance, discovered in the example of their masters — some of them professors at the art institutes — the guiding lines of an evolution towards the philosophical foundations and means of expression typical of national tradition. The broad thematic and stylistic horizon, the reinterpretation of the main directions of world art, the realization of characteristic syntheses were based often enough on the example of artists belonging to the older generation who had left a distinct original stamp on the Romanian painting of the preceding period.

One of the artists who, through his artistic creation and teaching activity exerted a deep influence on the vision of the generation which came to the fore in the mid-nineteen-fifties was *Alexandru Ciucurencu* (1903—1977). A great colourist by vocation, he had attained a purity of the image in which colour seemed to become light. Without giving up the essential principles of figurative painting, he reinterpreted them as a modality of communicating a message, not about the object as such, but about form as a constitutive element of a universal order. The construction of his compositions is so rigorous that the fluidity of the colouring does not endanger it; from Lhote, whose pupil he was in Paris, Ciucurencu retained only a concern with architectural coherence, the constructivist solution being nothing but an episode without any decisive consequence in the syntax of forms.

Ciucurencu is one of the modern painters whose vision cannot be considered to correspond to the history of world art. He belongs to the Romanian traditional art, first of all beacuse he refuses any excess: the metaphysics of his painting does not mean any separation from the natural model, but its translation into the metaphysical language of colour. Ciucurencu created his own poetics whose central element is the permanent correspondence between the individual significance of the object represented and the significance of the entire space to which the real model of the object belongs; in other words the pictorial motif is a metonymy of the real motif. This is due in the first place to the fact that the supreme object of Ciucurencu's painting is not to record his own lyrical tension: the logic of each painting results from "the relationship between warm and cold tones, between the lighted and the dark surfaces, from purely pictorial rules" (C. Prut). Ciucurencu eliminated any nonessential significance, the incidental, the ephemeral, but he remained — in the severe order the painting imposed — a sensous, fervent temperament. He came in the end to a solution which did not betray the concrete nature of the paste, but transformed it into a luminous stimulus which helps reveal the emotional make-up of the artist.

His influence upon his disciples was overwhelming, and few of his pupils were able to avoid it. The most gifted gave it an original interpretation, assimilating however the lesson of the deep poetic colouring of the master. In

Romanian painting, Ciucurencu was a genuine founder of school in the best sense of the word.

Under these circumstances, *Constantin Piliuță* (b. 1929) has managed to preserve an original profile. He too was a student of Ciucurencu and, like most of his fellow students, he enthusiastically admired his master. A splendid draftsman and a refined colourist, approaching the themes from real life with a delightful blend of gentleness and humour, Piliuță is a painter of calm images in which austere simplifications do not dispel the poetic aura. He solves the problems of the relationships between forms and colours with an impressive self-confidence and great freshness. *Aurel Nedel* (b. 1930), another pupil of Ciucurencu, masters so perfection the technique of drawing which he uses with great *finesse* to build planes of colour integrated into a clean, coherent ensemble. He is a meditative temperament and the chromatic ambience of his paintings conveys a bracing sensation of light which dissolves the shadows. The same feeling is conveyed by the painting of *Marius Cilievici* (b. 1930); colour is not a mere screen or a transcription — be it even lyrical — of the real object; it becomes a fluid pervading the entire space, it is the supreme reality, a solar plasma out of which forms materialize.

The painting of *Mihai Bandac* (b. 1939) occupies a somewhat similar register; his syntax, however, includes elements more obviously belonging to abstractionism in the sense of musical effects, apparently detached from their contingent reality.

Not all the students of Ciucurencu adopted the master's solutions, some because by temperament, they belonged to a different area of modern art; others, because a different influence was grafted on the lesson of Ciucurencu already when they were his students, an influence whose result was a more complicated synthesis.

This last category includes *Traian Brădean*, whose vocation for the constructions of severe forms drawn with a firm hand is obvious; the refined transition from one tone to another points to the persistent influence of Ciucurencu rendered however in a different harmony of colours. *Ilie Boca* (b. 1937), has adopted the principles of chromatism as a basis on which his energetic expressionism rests; its distritons call up Hofer whom Boca associates to his painting with infinite tenderness. *Teodor Bogoi* (b. 1933) has evolved a vision which brings together the tradition of folk painting and woodcuts and the quiet rhythms of the old Romanian fabrics.

Almost at the opposite pole of her master's lesson is the painting of *Carolina Iacob* who has become a staunch representative of surrealism. The vision of *Gabriela Pătulea-Drăguț* (b. 1935) originated in folk art; at first the depth of the colouring corresponded to the narrative character of the pictorial motif taken over from the oral tradition of folk literature. The structure of the composition has now become more refined, the surface of the painting evoking the ample tapestries of the Renaissance, the chromatic ensemble preserving the same blend of grace and sumptuousness.

Of the former students of Ciucurencu, *Vasile Celmare* (b. 1931) is one of those who was farthest from the influence of the master. This is not due only to the fact that another of his professors, *Ion Marșic* (1903—1975) represented a different current, a rigorously figurative one; it is also due to his classical temperament. His beginnings were marked by the influence of Cézanne. He then tackled graphics, asserting himself as one of the subtlest designers, the

author of lythographs in which the line is dynamic, precise and expressive. His painting has passed form a lapidary construction of an austere lyricism, to a vision influenced by his interest in monumental art: the perspective and trompe-l'oeil are replaced by a well-balanced distribution of forms on a coloured surface in broad flat patches. Of late he has started painting still lifes drawn and coloured with the preciseness and delicacy of the Dutch *petits maîtres*.

In the stylistic lability of *Eugen Crăciun* (b. 1922) one could recognize in the beginning only the consequences of the lessons of Ciucurencu or Baba who were his masters; his evolution followed a meandering, changing and always unpredictable course, from surrealism to objectual art, then to dadaism, to come suddenly to paintings executed in the most characteristic realistic way. *Elena Uță-Chelaru* (b. 1930) on the other hand, has shown an inclination for the delicate, discreet chromatics of Catul Bogdan, rather than for Ciucurencu's symphonic colouring.

In exchange, artists who made their début in the 1950s felt attracted by Ciucurencu's palette, although they had not been his pupils. *Iacob Lazăr* (b. 1931) studied with Gheorghe Labin, a painter who created eloquent epic compositions. For a time Lazăr remained within the sphere of Ciucurencu's delicate colour scheme, but a little later, towards the mid-nineteen-seventies, he adopted a peculiar chromatic architecture whose main feature is the construction of surfaces of vibrant color forming a unitary ensemble. His wife, *Rodica Lazăr* (b. 1931) combined Ciucurencu's example with Cézanne's, the virtues of the line with those of the colour, into a coherently articulated system of forms imbued with calm poesy.

The case of Baba's pupils is even more complicated. Many representatives of surrealism in the 1960s hailed from the studio of this master of an imposing vision created by his profound belief in the significances of the real universe (another important painter who steadily adopted the surrealist modalities, *Florin Niculiu* had studied with Dărăscu and Ciucurencu). The painter closest to the example of his master in the beginning was *Dan Hatmanu* (b. 1926) who at the time executed compositions based on light and shade effects. Yet soon after,he approached expressionism, though not in its entirety, and endeavoured to throw into relief the significances deriving from the analysis of a physiognomy and of the spiritual life of personages; later on his style changed, revealing a clear understanding of the laws of chromatic composition in the Moldavian mediaeval fresco. Of late, he gives the impression to have returned to the syntax of a poetic realism, ladden with a nostalgic lyricism or marked by an inclination for the rhetorical civic gesture.

Dimitrie Grigoraș (b. 1934) has remained faithful to the interpretations of form and colours he learnt from his master Baba. He loves clear images suited to his well-balanced temperament and to subjects devoid of any pathetic excess. *Constantin Albani* (b. 1935) started from a synthetic imagery of the figurative kind, but gave it up in favour of a geometrical organization of colour, with discreet transitions creating a harmony instinct with lyricism. *Mihai Cizmaru* (b. 1943) is a gifted painter, with a talent for the creation of a weird atmosphere which, however, does not come from the manner in which he narrates a subject but from the combination of real and imaginary elements. It is therefore not surrealism that explains his painting — as it was sometimes said — his art is rather metaphyscal, introspection being the source of these symbolic images.

If to all the above we add painters Câlția, Ilfoveanu and Vladimir Zamfirescu three of the subtlest representatives of surrealism, we can realize even more easily how varied the vision of the pupils of Corneliu Baba is.

Professor for several decades at the Bucharest Fine Arts Academy, Camil Ressu's teaching was based on the principle of free development of the personality of the young artists, in full accord with their temperamental inclinations. That is why it is not stylistic affinities that bring them together but their general respect for the virtues of colour and drawing, the way the master viewed them, as modalities of representing the relationships of the artist with the universe of the real. *Pavel Codiță* (b. 1916), for instance, asserted himself both in easel painting, fresco, tapestry and mosaic, the refined subtlety of his palette is the main characteristic of his art in all these domains; in each of them, however, he preserves its specific traits, cultivating a unitary imagery suited to their respective technique. In painting, colour seems to flood the entire space, yet it does not do violence to the relations between forms but subjects them to a strict, complex dialectics which exalts poetic significances. Reduced to the essential, birds or plants, people or fragments of a landscape seem to be merging with the coloured magma covering the entire picture. The result is a gradual transformation of the concrete into the abstract, a transformation accompanied by a musical rhythm.

Virgil Miu (b. 1928) dissolves the form in colour creating calm harmonious effects in which remote echoes of post-impressionism are still present. *Dan Cristian* (b. 1934), who teaches anatomy at the Fine Arts Institute, has gradually adopted a simplification of form retaining the characteristic element and eliminating the accidental; *Tanasis Fappas* (b. 1922) has preserved the formal and chromatic stylization of Byzantine origin, achieving it with delicate lyricism; *Ion Minoiu* (b. 1931), painter and cermist, is an artist with a rich imagination; the subject with him is a pretext for his sometimes overly bold decorative constructions revealing a clear sense of the material.

If we also mention painters Eugen Popa and Ion Gheorghiu, each with a clearly outlined profile and different temperaments, who too were the pupils of Ressu, we can realize how varied was the composition of this group formed in course of time around one of the most outstanding Romanian artists and pedagogues.

Ion Marșic was one of the most gifted professors at the Fine Arts Institute in Bucharest, although he did not win the recognition he deserved as a painter of great worth. A shyness difficult to explain prevented this sensitive artist, with a thorough knowledge of his art, to send his works more frequently to various exhibitions. He was, in exchange, a talented pedagogue who has given Romanian art in recent decades a few very good painters including, Vasile Celmare, Viorel Mărginean, Vladimir Șetran and Gheorghe I. Anghel.

One of his pupils, *Vasile Grigore* (b. 1935) is a colourist by vocation; his painting, developing amply in symphonic tonalities, combines sonorous effects, very close to fauvism, with a clear musicality; his chromatic interpretations invest his painting with an equilibrium which sets bounds to his abstractionism. The pure colour, the tonal values lend the entire composition a plastic value independent of the one the subject proper possesses.

Eugen Tăutu (b. 1945) cannot be placed within the bounds of any trend of modern art. It was said that he has the vocation of vast spaces, which is true except for the fact that space, in Tăutu's vision, is *a place*, i.e. it always acquires a deeply human meaning, the metaphor arising from the lyrical evocation of certain existential significances. He is *a constructor* in the deep

sense of the word: symbols and allegories (belonging to classical mythology but forming his own lyrical cosmogony) make up minuscule fragments, like in some strange, lettering. The entire composition is, in fact, a labyrinth consisting of a multitude of labyrinths leading to the very core of the metaphor.

Among the noteworthy pupils of Marșic are *Mihaela Nica* (b. 1934), faithful to figurative art to which a graceful decorativism is added, and *Ilie Cioartă* (b. 1942), an expressionist with relevant inclinations for balanced architectures, in the spirit of the traditional rationalist syntheses of Romanian expressionism during the inter-war period.

The feeling for colour of *Gabriela Pătulea* and *Elena Uță-Chelaru* benefited no doubt from their encounter with the vision of their professor Catul Bogdan in whose painting the significance of the image does not reside in the subject but in a state of mind, in a mood translated with subtle poesy in the language of plastic forms. It is the same with the surrealist art of *Sever Frențiu* (b. 1931) — so different from his masters' —, which has retained — beyond the strange atmosphere specific to the type of narative — the ability to make line and colour cooperate in order to achieve the unitary effect of the composition. *Constanțiu Mara* (b. 1937) is living in Sweden since 1980; "I was able to keep the Romanian identity of my art due to my impassionate admiration of Grigorescu, Andreescu, Luchian, Petrașcu, Pallady". And, at the same time, he strongly believes that the Romanian art belongs to the European tradition and that "the notion of European culture is indispensable for the unity of Europe". The fundamental synthesis of his painting is based on the classical balances of forms, poetical interpretation of reality and, above all, on a creative function of light. Mara — whose paintings, stained glasses, tapestries, mosaics aim to the same essential values of construction and light — is an artist of wide intellectual scape. With *Spiru Vergulescu* (b. 1934) the portrait and especially the landscape produce a strange sensation: we feel we are in the presence of a world of independent forms, in spite of the precision (or maybe because of it) with which the real models are reproduced. Broad, luminous screens organize the image in which white and black participate in the organization of the chromatic space. *Coriolan Hora* (b. 1928), who studied with Aurel Ciupe as well, realizes a synthesis between the almost palpable materiality of the paste and the expansive colouring — descending as it were from Kandisky — which characterises his landscapes with their wide undulating planes. *Florin Mitroi* (b. 1935) is a subtle poet of strictly stylized forms, reduced to their essence; colour is simplified becoming a basic tone, preserving however the effect of an ample musical harmony created by the clever counterpoint association and tonal transitions. There is in Mitroi's painting an austerity pointing to the strict dialectics of the chromatic relations.

The name of *Gheorghe Popescu* (1903—1975) has always been connected with the development of the monumental fresco in the last few decades. The reinterpretation of the Byzantine tradition has created, in the painting of some churches in Bucharest and Constanța a specific pictorial synthesis in which the type of stylization rejuvenates the historical model without contradicting it. Together with Ștefan Constantinescu, he has executed a fresco of wide scope at the UN building in Geneva.

As regards easel painting Gheorghe Popescu was the same discreet artist as many other professors of the Institute who devoted most of their time to teaching. His vision, influenced by the folk woodcuts and by the intensely coloured enamelled ceramics, is typical of both his small-sized and monumental

compositions; the latter, however, are the best illustrations of the important place Gheorghe Popescu holds in Romanian modern painting.

Gheorghe Popescu did not found a school in the sense of a common stylistics adopted by his pupils, who only adhered to the general principles of an art originating in tradition and turning it to good account in the light of a modern vision. One of his pupils, *Eftimie Modîlcă* (b. 1936) consistently applied what he learnt from his master to his own monumental paintings. His evolution in easel painting is rather misleading: from the landscapes and portraits of his beginnings executed in traditional chromatic harmonies, he turned to *pop-art* and kinetic art, to return to the figurative and to lyrical notations, creating works based on the classical equilibrium of planes. *Romeliu Copilaşi* (b. 1935) cultivates a traditional painting which colouring reflects a Dionysiac encounter with the real model. Of Gheorghe Popescu's pupils, *Ion Grigore* (b. 1940) came closest to the example of folk tradition which he followed for a time in the sense of a simplification like in the icons on glass. The theme of the village — steadily reiterated in his paintings — has been treated differently in point of forms, although the source of its styled is still folk painting; the landscape now is pervaded by a coloured vapour which blurs contours and creates an atmosphere of magic fairy-tale.

The directions followed by the pupils of *Gheorghe Labin* (b. 1907) are ever more varied. Labin is the author of ample, vividly coloured historical paintings, in which the grandiloquent gestures and the dialogue of colours are rendered in a romantic manner. Artists quite different in their inclinations from their master — Ion Nicodim, Iacob and Rodica Lazăr — were trained in his studio. Tanasis Fappas and Ion Grigore too studied with him for a time. *Constanța Crișan* (b. 1925) studied with Jean Al. Steriadi as well, but was not influenced by the impressionist painting of the great colourist; her paintings and tapestries possess a jubilant palette, but the distribution of the chromatic zones follows a more firmly limited scheme, with a pleasant interplay of forms. *Viorel Grimalschi* (b. 1947) decided early enough on a painting conjuring up a fantastic world; he then gradually came to an austere reduction to signs and, further on, he explored a territory on the borderline of the figurative and of abstract painting.

The pupils of Nicolae Dărăscu, a great painter and pedagogue, have approached the problems of composition from different angles, reaching varied conclusions in point of style. There may be common points between the vision of Vlad Florescu and that of Paul Gherasim, for instance, but differences are obviously more significant. *Gheorghe Spiridon* (b. 1923), he too a pupil of Dărăscu, knows how to produce a plastic effect on which the drawing — reduced to an effigy at times — and the colouring — cordial and vibrant — cooperate harmoniously. *Grigore Spirescu* (b. 1922) realizes an organized construction of form and colour, avoiding to impair the intrinsic lyricism of the model. *Gina Hagiu* (b. 1924) is a more dynamic character; her landscapes unfold in broad planes, the colour scheme expresses a poetic reflexion whose main feature is an aspiration to essentialize form.

A prestigious pedagogue, Aurel Ciupe contributed — at the Cluj-Napoca Istitute of Fine Arts — to the professional training of artistic personalities marking some significant moments in the evolution of Romanian contemporary art. Sever Frențiu and Coriolan Hora are some of his former students, together with *Alexandrina Gheție-Hilohi* (b. 1935) who discarded post-impressionism for cubism, discovering them her real vocation in abstract art. She

creates ample images with clever discontinuous rhythms, whose metaphors do not aim at an excessive encoding, but create a poetic mood apt to be transmitted to the on-looker.

The Permanence of Tradition

The changes of the artistic conceptions, a natural and foreseeable consequence of the changes having occurred in the very structure of the Romanian social world in recent decades, have not brought about the denial of the values the traditional forms of art contain. This fact has always been corroborated by the wide echo stirred whenever retrospective exhibitions showing the works of artists belonging to the older generations are organized, as well as by the perseverance with which the younger graduates of the art institutes turn their attention to traditional models. It is also worth mentioning that assimilating the examples of the founders of Romanian art almost never means taking over a specific morphology but — more especially — certain ideas, certain modalities of organizing the imagery.

The persistence of the watercolour demonstrates the great lyrical talent of numerous contemporary Romanian artists. The watercolour painters share some common traits, among which a tendency towards interpreting the real motif (the landscape more especially) as a source of poetic emotion. A group of aquarellists was set up in Iași, contributing along the years to raising the prestige of a technique characterized by its spontaneous notation and delicate feeling. *Mihai Cămăruț* (b. 1904), *Ion Petrovici* (b. 1914), *Adrian Podoleanu* (b. 1928) have achieved popularity by a style cultivating a pure and calm image, a discreet vibration of light. Those are also, in general, the characteristic features of some watercolour painters who live in other seats of culture of the country; such are *Clara Cantemir* (b. 1905), *Nicolae Polidor* (b. 1899), *Constantin Găvenea* (b. 1911), *Iulia Hălăucescu* (b. 1924), *Maria Constantin* (b. 1926).

Roman Mottl (b. 1921) represents a somewhat different hypostasis. He has gained recognition by his pen-and-ink drawings, drawings in charcoal, monotypes and some works executed in a mixed technique, vivid commentaries of motifs of folk origin. *Ion Murariu* (b. 1922) can define forms with a surprising energy; this brings his water colours (and his painting as well) closer to the Munich expressionism; his affinities with surrealism the critics have mentioned are not due to some specific syntax but to a strange atmosphere.

Gheorghe Iuster was one of the artists who enhanced the prestige of the water colour in the post-war years; his art displays a remarkable force of building an image, while the transparency of the colouring admirably supports the vivid rhythms of forms. We should also mention two of the masters who did not give in to the injunctions of a rigid, exclusivist critique which forced upon the artists anecdotic-narrative themes and an emphatic, grandiloquent treatment. They are *Iosif R.* (1894—1975), a delicate colourist evoking with quiet melancholy the townscapes ladden with the discreet poesy of the past, and *Viorel Huși* (1911—1972), a bohemian character, author of works in which both line and colouring are picturesque and subtle.

The history of modern art, particularly of the recent decades, allows but approximate systematizations, more often than not strictly didactic. The artistic movement is so varied, so diverse, that it is very difficult — and sometimes arbitrary — to establish trends or directions. The influence exerted by personalities who often do not belong to any current, or who achieve vast syntheses of the aesthetic ideas characterizing a peculiar stage in the evolution of contemporary painting, sculpture and decorative arts, is more decisive than the programmes and manifestoes of the numerous (and ephemeral) groups.

Besides Ressu, Ciucurencu, Baba, Catul Bogdan, Ciupe, Medrea, Mac Constantinescu, Kazar and other prestigious professors at the art institutes, whose influence is direct and natural, many artists although were not teachrs, have had a decisive impact on the professional training of many artistic personalities of the present time.

Ghiață and Țuculescu are some of the artists belonging to this category. *Marius Bunescu* (1881—1971) exerted no direct influence, but his prestigious stylistic orientation stirred a wide echo in more recent art. An artist who created powerful structures and built his palette with a sure sense of balance, Bunescu asserted himself through rigour and sensibility, the two elements of an ample vision, revealing his great vitality, his force which was never exhausted, not even in his greatly lucid old age. Possessing a thorough plastic culture (he was director of the Simu Museum, one of the most important institutions of the kind in Romania during the inter-war period, and of the National Gallery of the Bucharest Art Museum), Bunescu evolved a style quite suited to the expression of his rigorous and well-balanced classical creed.

The art of *Henri Catargi* (1894—1977) is completely different. Neither does his painting belong to any definite trend: he worked in the studios of artists of varied orientations — Maurice Denis and Vuillard, Serusier and Vallotton, Bissière and Lhote, Bonnard and Grommaire. None of them left any decisive stamp on his vision. In any case, eclecticism did not characterize his style and the only influence one could trace in his work is the influence of Theodor Pallady, one of the great Romanian colourists. An exemplary existence, a powerfully articulated interior armature of the composition, a permanent tendency to transform contingency into spirituality lend his painting an original significance. Colour and line are always perfectly balanced, cooperating in the building of a rigorous logical image which the critics have considered to derive from Poussin and Cezanne. However, Catargi does not turn the construction into the final aim of the artistic expression; on the contrary, he has always been attracted by the authenticity of the immediate, while the inner geometry of the composition is *a datum*, one might say, of the temperament of a great classicist, of an artist who is equally happy to contemplate the architectures supporting the very construction of the world and the almost imperceptible irrisations of a flower.

Ion Popescu-Negreni (b. 1907) is a painter of light, light enveloping the entire visual space. Condensed inside the corollas of flowers, like in some tiny suns, irradiating on the wide horizons of his landscapes, emanating as it were from the objects, light is the main subject of his painting, built solidly, unostentatiously, freely expressing fundamental certainties. *Gheorghe N. Vînătoru* (1905—1979) passed from a Cézanne-like vision and an almost expressionist treatment of colour, to a refined and lyrical pictorial quality of cold tones; his clear, fluid plastic interpretation was enhanced by the unexpected accents of vivid warm colours, to make up an ensemble of a calm poetic

transparency. *Eugen Gîscă* (1908—1989) too started from the example of Cézanne. His landscapes are based on the perfect harmony between the line describing the delicate contours of objects and the quiet colouring, pulverized as it were by a barely felt light suffusing the air in which the entire horizon is bathed.

A consistently realistic trend asserted itself in Cluj. Those who made of it a prestigious current in the 1930s, went on cultivating the same forms in a more recent period, constituting a landmark for many younger artists. *Alexandru Mohi* (b. 1902) has interpreted with verve the elements of realism, introducing an exuberant palette and, in the portraits, clever touches of humour. *Iosif Bene* (b. 1903) — who is also an expert in decorative arts, tapestry more especially — is an austere builder of forms, in the spirit of an expressive drawing he learnt from his master, professor Ressu. With *Petre Abrudan* (b. 1907) his relationships with folk art and with the Romanian medieval fresco left a characteristic stamp on his paintings in which Byzantine hieratic elements combine with a lapidary expression borrowed from folk art and with a never excessive dramatism. Of the entire group of Cluj, *Zoltàn Andrassy* (b. 1910) is perhaps the most faithful to the principles of traditional realism; less obvious in the other domains of art he illustrated (easel graphics, poster, tapestry, monumental art); the durability of his realistic means of expression is manifest in his paintings, both in themes — taken as a rule the social reality surrounding him — and in the treatment. *Gavril Miklossy* (b. 1912) has interpreted these principles in a highly dramatic, grandiloquent narrative painting. The same narrative element prevails in the painting of *Teodor Harşia* (b. 1914) as well; a warm palette lends unity to the planes of image and the ensemble conveys a robust feeling. A different interpretation of the narrative is to be found in the painting of *Zoltan Kovacs* (b. 1913): in his ample compositions, he cultivates the anecdote with a precise sense of the movement so naturally that one can fell the intention of the painter to create symbols with a moral significance yet devoid of didacticism.

The figurative is, in fact, a well represented category in contemporary Romanian painting. A clear-cut separation from the abstract modalities is, no doubt, impossible. Many representative artists of the period have created paintings in which the real motif is invested with a philosophical or poetic value in which the symbolic element becomes essential.

An illustration of this type of synthesis, fundamental to an entire direction of world painting, especially in the second half of the century, is to be found in the evolution of the work of *Brăduț Covaliu* (b. 1924), an evolution never overshadowed by inconsistencies, a poetics openly confessing its origin in the traditional lyricism of Romanian painting. The line is firm, yet subjected to inner laws which make it pliable and integrate it into the coloured forms. The colouring is reduced to a few essential tones, yet this austerity conveys the joy of the man who always discovers the meanings of the visible world. Brown and black have a deep sonorous ring: the picture executed in earthy, mat tones, is brilliant and quiet, a brilliance resulting from the superposing of tones close to one another.

Sometimes the representation is reduced to a graphic sign, the painting seems to be returning to the real motif, evoking its significance rather than its form. The symbols are clear: a world traversed by the élan of horses in their soaring flight, like in folk legends, a calm, never pathetic, flowery world

apreading to the end of the horizon. Everything is subjected to a musical harmony (the recurrent theme of the music in Covaliu's work is significant indeed) the grave chromatics developing the deep tonalities of the major scales. It is a "cosa mentale" immersed in the lyrical contemplation of the world.

We cannot say either that with *Ion Sălișteanu* (b. 1929) the figurative and the abstract are viewed as opposite categories: they coexist and carry on a dialogue about the theme. The neat geometry of vertical and horizontal lines is not designed only to organize the image, but — especially — to convey a belief in all-powerful reason. However, Sălișteanu's rationalism cannot be defined as an opposition to lyrical subjectivism: the idea and sensibility are the components of a state of mind which makes the artist receptive to the tiniest movements of colour in the air which seems to absorb the light.

Colour is delimited inside strongly contrasting zones; softened by an ash-grey or by a ceramic brown, these contrasts acquire a sweet enveloping resonance, surprisingly poetic. The forms, drawn in strong lines, give the impression they are pictorial gestures of the subconscious strata, though in real fact they are drawn with a strict logic and defined by a stringent need to construct the planes rhythmically.

It would be quite arbitrary to place *Gheorghe Iacob* (b. 1925) within the figurative, as an opposition to the abstract. The definition of Iacob's vision is complex, for the constructivist geometrism mentioned in connection with him is not an aim in itself, but a means of organizing the image rationally. The evanescent contours of the objects melt in the luminous substance of the colour which invades the entire optic space. The artist has never given up the basic principles of the relations with the real motif; the objects are reinterpreted as signs of symbols which reject hermetism and encoding. The semantics of this painting means an essentialization and not a shifting of senses.

The formation of significances in the painting of *Constantin Blendea* (b. 1929) is rather similar, but it is achieved with other stylistic means. Here, the vision of the composition comes from the Romanian mediaeval and Renaissance fresco. The object is defined through a unitary patch of colour, neatly outlined; the harmony of the colouring and of the forms coincide. The metaphor is created by all the objects as well as by the reduction of form and colour. The relation between the two planes — reality and the pictorial transformation of the motif — is thus simultaneously revealed in the structure of forms as well as in the chromatics of the painting. For a long time already an expert restorer of old paintings, Blendea has also acquired a very good command of various techniques, which helps him use a highly adequate expressive language.

It goes without saying that metaphor *per se* does not lead to abstraction: a significant transition occurs in contemporary Romanian art as well om the mimetic notation to the expression of the poetic sense of a real landscape. There are works by painters who, though adhering to a rigorous figurative painting, have managed to render in metaphorical terms landscapes or compositions with objects. The painting of Ghiață, Catargi, Ciucurencu or Baba offer but a few of the many angles from which the problem could be viewed. With the younger generations, the adoption of this type of interpretation of the real is more recent than one might suspect. Without swerving from the rules of a realist grammar, *Constantin Crăciun* (b. 1928), for instance, convey

a feeling of wide space, of the quiet vibration of light, of the atmosphere enveloping the contours in a light colouring. Although he has won recognition by his beautiful monumental frescoes, mosaics and ceramics, Crăciun has not given up easel painting and his presence — though unfrequent — with works on show at various salons is always interesting. *Nicolae G.Iorga* (b. 1933) has asserted himself through his realistic painting characterized by a sincere poetic participation and the clarity of the form evoking an atmosphere. With *Radu Costinescu* (b. 1931), his subsequent evolution towards a more complex syntax has not annuled his adhesion to the figurative painting he cultivates with a certain aplomb.

The work of *Petru Popovici* (1938—1986) is characterized by a constant figurative stylistics, in the spirit of realism; a gentle, contemplative temperament, he took delight in the contemplation of the vast plains bathed in the transparent shadow of the twilight or in the triumphant light of the afternoon. *Ovidiu Paștina* (b. 1934), who belongs to the same generation understands reality as an opportunity to meditate on reason and its shaping force: reduced to a few tones, essentialized in delicate, subtle whites, greys and pinks, colour does not convey sensations but thoughts regarding the object as the inflexible golden section. Similar in some measure, but also evincing a voluptuous feeling when approaching reality, the painting of *Paul Sima* (b. 1932) is the expression of a lyrical effusive temperament, held in check by a firm logical construction.

Things are clearer when it comes to the representatives of the older generations who, in course of time, have adhered to the principles of traditional realism. Although *Victor Mihăilescu-Craiu* (1908—1978), for instance, illustrated the aesthetics of postimpressionism, the same as *Călin Alupi* (b. 1906), *Nicolae Vasilescu* (b. 1913) or *Ștefan Barabaș* (b. 1914), they have been included in the wide sphere of realism. There were grounds for it in their case, as well as in other cases, because no matter the emotional participation of the artists it is the real motif and its significances that prevail in the pictorial construction.

It is a generation that includes personalities whose aesthetic creed is clearly formulated: *Traian Bilțiu-Dăncuș* (1899—1974) who was said to have preserved the genuine candour of the folk artist; *Nicolae Brana* (b. 1905), who has created a lyrical atmosphere bathed in a dreamy light; *Șerban Zainea* (b. 1907), a constructor of coloured forms and a fine black-and-white artist; *Janos Incze* (b. 1909) whose painting contains powerful compassionate accents for the humble inhabitants of the former suburbs; *Eugeniu Ștefan Boușcă* (b. 1912), the author of paintings and stained-glass windows in which our national history is evoked by means of an intense colour scheme, *Petru Feier* (b. 1912) concerned with capturing the atmosphere peculiar to a place. As a matter of fact local colour is a constant feature of a particular trend of realistic Romanian painting, a trend that can be noticed even with portraitist and landscape painters trained in the 1940s and 1950s, most of them faithful to this day to the principles of this doctrine.

The landscapes of *Traian Goga* (b. 1917) describe a mirific world which, however, can be easily recognized in the geography of Transylvania. *Alexandru Cumpătă* (b. 1922) creates monumental landscapes in which he handles the laws of perspective freely and with a sure sense of the harmony of forms.

A delicate colourist is *Afane Teodorcanu* (b. 1921) who feels a discreet delight in the aspects he discovers in a world which, for him, is full of poesy. *Gheorghe Răducanu* (b. 1924) has a good command of the traditional fresco; he is a colourist of pale tones, a painter of quiet landscapes. With brothers *Emil* (b. 1926) and *Aurel* (b. 1928) *Aniței* one can distinguish certain natural affinities concerning their vision: the same calm arrangement of the chromatic composition, the same belief in the poetic significances of the real motif. *Paul Atanasiu* (b. 1922) holds a place apart in this generation; he is the author of ample battle-pieces, rather grandiloquent, but drawn with a firm line and a sincere élan in the construction of the ensemble.

A witty, cultivated artist, *Octavian Angheluță* (1904—1978) set forth as early as the end of the 1920s the psychological analysis and constructive rigour realism could achieve. It was the same with *Vasile Varga* (b. 1921) who was able to extract — in an intelligent, simple way — the poetic and logical essence of the real image. With *Anastase Anastasiu* (b. 1918) reality is interpreted especially in its social and historical sense, his painting containing references to important events of the past, treated amply, dynamically with a certain inclination toward constructivist simplification. *Gheorghe Zidaru* (b. 1923) resorts to a traditional grammar, setting store by the emotional participation of the artist more especially, while *Zina Blănuță* (b. 1913) introduces in her painting the emotional values of colour.

An interesting figure is *Dragoș Morărescu* (b. 1923) active both in painting, sculpture and engraving, always choosing his subjects from the reality surrounding him and treating them with a pathos which still does not move them away from the style of realism. Although he more and more obviously directs his attention to a synthesis between Byzantine icon and the Dutch painting of the 17th century, *Corneliu Petrescu* (b. 1924) does not renounce the principles of realism, not even when the scene he describes in a precious chromatics of browns and gold is the fruit of his imagination.

The presence of the figurative is significant in the work of artists who, in some way or other, adhered to programmes designed to renew the pictorial syntax, programmes which have become ever more coherent beginning in the nineteen-sixties. Sometimes, fidelity to the modalities of realism means to follow the example of the figurative in folk art. *Rodica Marinescu* (b. 1937) or *Liviu Suhar* (b. 1943) establish a characteristic relation with the literary folk motif whose substance — in its specific poetic datum — they adopt. With *Mircea Bălău* (b. 1931) or *Sanda Șărămăt* (b. 1927), the realistic treatment of the subject coincides with the creation of a well-balanced construction of the composition in point of chromatic organization and of the architecture of forms. The pictorial formula of *Niculiță Secrieru* (b. 1938) is almost similar, although with him colour is organized in such a way that it tends to achieve a formal abstractization of the ensemble.

After a début in which his original personality had clearly asserted itself, *Ion Gînju* (b. 1942) seldom exhibited his works; when his works were again on show at an ample exhibition organized by the Iași branch of the Romanian Union of Fine Artists, his ability to construct a composition with a firm hand and lyrical élan, as well as to capture the poetic permanencies of a real universe came to the fore. With *Lidia Nancuischi* (b. 1918) these permanencies are rendered with the help of a delicate, spontaneous line, while with *Octavian*

Vişan (b. 1933) they are interpreted in a broad sense as constructive elements that participate in the description of a landscape. *Adalbert Luca* (b. 1933) is a meditative mind pondering on the meanings of human existence; he identifies them in daily occurrences translated by means of intense tones and sharp reductions of the line. *Mircea Vremir* (b. 1932) is attracted by the details of a real image and organizes them with a sure sense of the colour effects.

Artists with different temperaments, artists trained in the studios of master with different visions, achieve similar results in the interpretation of the visible world, owing to their confidence in the pictorial significance of the real motif; *Nicolae Delaport* (b. 1929), *Gheorghe Boţan* (b. 1929), *Bogdan Stihi* (b. 1929), *Sergiu Rugină* (b. 1931) invest the subject — often based on the landscapes they love — with a lyrical sense devoid of dramatic tension. Adhering to the same principles, *Liviu Lăzărescu* (b. 1934) creates images of a strange brilliance which brings them nearer to a moderate surrealism. *Doina Hordovan* (b. 1934) is obviously attracted by abstract art which she investigates without for that matter renouncing the essential significances of the real image. *Diodor Dure* (b. 1926) has developed variations of a painting influenced mainly by the aesthetics of realism, but also to some extent by those of expressionism and constructivism.

Mircea Velea (b. 1924) has reached a chromatic synthesis in which the drawing seems to be absorbed by the dominant tone innundating the entire optic space, conveying thus an intense dramatic vibration. *Sultana Maitec* (b. 1928) started from an interpretation recalling Campigli's return to Etruscan sources; she then evolved towards the essentialization of the image in which the real element is represented by a chromatic quality directly connected with the main quality of the respective element: the yellow of corn, the gold of the sun, the brown of the earth become genuine zodiacal symbols. The painting of *Horea Paştina* (b. 1946) has gone through several stages which helped him clarify his vision; the landmarks can be traced, with each stage, in the tradition of Romanian figurative art combining with the rationalism of Cézanne's painting, to form significant syntheses. The result is an all embracing art, in which the real image displays its entire poetic substance blending lucidity and reverie.

Dorian Szasz (b. 1924) is an artist who has never given up the figurative elements, but has subjected them to the requirements of the modern syntax. He favours dynamic forms, neatly outlined patches of colour standing out against a background treated in vigorous *à-plats*. It is not the theme (sports, football and rugby more especially) that has determined his mode of expression; on the contrary, it is the stylistic vision which has imposed the subject. The arhythmical movement, its vitality, the clever organization of colour in a discontinuous optic space, the powerfully stressed patches of colour, have found an ideal figurative support in the thrilling atmosphere of the playing field.

An art of human representation, by tradition, sculpture has in many cases been faithful to a vision strictly subordinated to the realist syntax. The apparently paradoxical case, mentioned above, of *Milița Petrașcu* (1892–1976) is quite telling; the founder of some avant-garde groups, the pupil of artists who laid the foundations of a decisive stage in the development of modern art — Matisse, Bourdelle, Brâncuşi — , she was still faithful to the realistic tradition. Neither did Mac Constantinescu — he too participating in the

activities of modernist groups — give up the grammar of the figurative. The narrative character of their plastic language, made the two artists resort to the technique of the bas-relief which, together with other masters of the time (Ion Jalea among others), they illustrated with a rich imagination and dynamism.

Monumental ensembles have been erected in some places: at Blaj, on the Field of Freedom, for instance, where the 1848 Revolution in Transylvania started, were unveiled, the busts of the leaders of the revolution, placed round an allegorical statue executed by Ion Vlasiu; at Moisei, in the Maramureș mountains in the north of Transylvania, a group of statues, so eloquent in their simplicity, executed by Gheza Vida, call to mind, like as many menhirs, the memory of the peasants and partisans executed by Nazis the in 1944.

Besides the monuments which in many cases require a narrative commentary, we witness the development of the bas-relief as an autonomous art, implying a precise gradation of the pictorial light and shade effects achieved with the means of sculpture. The new prestige of the genre has been consolidated by artists of great prestige — Mircea Spătaru, Imre Gyenge (b. 1939) —, as also by younger artists such as *Nicolae Kruch, jr.* (b. 1954), or Dinu Rădulescu.

Of the sculptors who have illustrated, all along these years, the permanencies of realism, special mention should be made of *Vasile Vasiliu-Falti* (b. 1902), the most prominent representative of animal sculpture *Marcel Guguianu* (b. 1922), a sensitive portraitist, *Gheorghe Vartic* (b. 1928), the author of constructivist, symbolic simplifications, full of inventiveness *Iosif Constantin* (b. 1932), who is an excelent graphic artist as well. The portrait continues to reveal its traditional values in the creations of artists faithful to realism — *Nicolae Crișan* (b. 1923) *Vasile Condurache* (b. 1919), *Nicolae Enea* (b. 1926), *Mihai Coșan* (b. 1925), *Constantin Nicolin* (b. 1930), *Ion Condiescu* (b. 1943), belonging to a younger generation, reconsiders the theses of the figurative art, examining them with a careful eye and discovering the points of contact with the modern interpretations of the art of the volume.

Sculpture in the last few years has undergone a continuous reduction to essential forms, viewed as a metaphor of meditation on human condition. Many artists — particularly young — are able to carry on their investigations in sculpture *camps* organized in many zones of the country; the most representative — because it was the first and also because it established an ample and clear programme — is the camp of Măgura in the Buzău Mountains, in the north-east of Wallachia. In course of time, a genuine open-air museum of contemporary Romanian sculpture has come into being in the large glade situated here.

Similar camps have been opened for other arts as well — painting, monumental ceramics — often combining authentic and functional values. Such was for instance the metal sculpture camp at Galați, already mentioned; the monumental ceramics camp at Medgidia, in Dobrudja; the ceramics executed here lend an original aspect to the town. Works of monumental ceramics have been placed along some important high-ways as well; they are elegant works of art designed to gradually replace the *kitsch* made of mosaic or ceramics scattered inside many towns and health resorts. Unfortunately, in the last years the *camps* have fallen under an official interdiction: more than that, some works in Medigdia have been destroyed and almost

all sculptures in the Titan Park in Bucharest have been buried by the bulldoze r sent there by the city mayor.

Ceramics is an art which — as is known — has a long tradition in Romanian culture. The foundation of a national school of decorative arts has coincided, in the inter-war period with a general impulse of arts which were discovering at the time the essential values of folklore. A centre which exerted a far-reaching influence in this domain was then founded at Văleni (Prahova County) where the great historian Nicolae Iorga initiated summer courses enjoying an international participation. At the same time, a vision based on the modern reinterpretation of traditional artistic creation was cultivated at the Bucharest Fine Arts Academy (especially in the ateliers of Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck and Mac Constantinescu).

The artists who asserted themselves in this domain in the 1920s and 1930s promoted a trend whose source of inspiration was folklore. *Germaine Vasilescu* (b. 1896), *Maria Chelsoi* (b. 1909), *Violeta Crăciun* (b. 1912), *Maria Vaida* (b. 1915) are only a few of the artists who gained recognition at the time when this specific style was restructured. Their influence was equally strong after the year 1944.

The latter half of the 1960s was a second important moment in the evolution of these arts. Several artists, who had often basically trained to become painters or sculptors, discovered points of contact between ceramics and sculpture and realized a synthesis able to create open-air spatial structures. *Flaviu Dragomir* (1915 — 1974), *Constantin Bulat* (1917—1975), a little later the very young generation at the time — *Patriciu Matcescu* (b. 1927), *Ioana Șetran* (b. 1936), *Lazăr Florian Alexe* (b. 1938), *Costel Badea* (b. 1940) — gave ceramic art a function seldom known before, creating monuments which were placed in the new architectural environment of the Romanian towns, particularly in the modern health resorts situated on the shores of the Black Sea. Others — Vasile Celmare, Ion Minoiu, *Lucia Teodorescu-Maftei* (b. 1940) *Petre Nichita* (b. 1937), *Gheorghe Tiutin* (b. 1935) have made of ceramics an art designed to decorate interiors: panels, variable modules, ceramic tiles.

Artists representing different conceptions devoted themselves exclusively to the introduction of artistic structures in the daily atmosphere of the house: *Ion Antonică* (b. 1937), *Tatiana Pasima* (b. 1938), *Rodica Mazilescu* (b. 1933), *Ion Berendea* (b. 1943), *Ioana Stepanov* (b. 1942), *Mihaela Ștefănescu* (b. 1943), *Tereza Panelli* (b. 1944) are only a few of those who have asserted themselves in recent years. Symposiums have been organized in which artists and technicians participated; they are held in large ceramics and porcelain factories and are followed by immediate experiments and mass production.

Glass used to artistic purposes has also raised similar problems in the last two decades. In the 1960s the foundations were laid for the integration of this material into the new architecture, and a programme was worked out designed to make glass objects acquire the function of environmental art.

A particular merit in the promotion — some twenty-five years ago already — of a really modern art of glass belongs to *Zoe Băicoianu* (1910—1987), a sculptor who had won a great prestige as the author of monumental works. Assimilating to perfection the complicated technique of glass-blowing, she evolved an aesthetics of forms, turning to advantage, in a surprising alternation, both mat and transparent surfaces. Artists such as Zoe Băicoianu, *Olga Porumbaru* (b. 1919) or *Constanța Dogeanu* (b. 1923) who fully contributed to the "ennobling" of this art, were joined — towards the end of the 1960s — by several young people who endowed this fragile

material with an unexpected power of plastic expression, creating objects for the environmental space, ornaments for interiors, prototypes for the industry of glassware. *Dionisie Popa* (b. 1938), *Vlad Munteanu-Rîmnic* (b. 1940), *Dan Băncilă* (b. 1934) have used their imagination and verve to create objects belonging as it were to a fantastic world, peopled by graceful, transparent plants and insects.

The art of glass has been offered favourable conditions to embelish everyday life: many prototypes have entered mass production as a result of symposiums organized in factories and have brought about a change — though not deep enough — in the mentality of those who carry on trade in this field.

But of all the decorative arts it is tapestry which has witnessed the most spectacular development. In the pre-war period tapestry became a sort of prolongation of the tradition of folk carpets — especially in the works by *Aurelia Ghiață* (b. 1896) and of *Maria Pană-Buescu* (1896—1978) — thus revealing its great aesthetic importance; a second direction in the development of this age-old art was initiated by *Ana Jiquidi* (1896—1980), a prestigious artist who adopted the specific functionality of the Bauhaus. (In fact, during the inter-war period, the Romanian avant-garde often followed the example of the Weimar school and organized courses of study meant to develop an integrating vision of art objects). It is significant that in the last quarter of the century painters and graphic artists of note have been atracted by tapestry: Lena Constante, Margareta Sterian, Pavel Codiță, Virgil Almășanu, Gheorghe Șaru, Ion Nicodim, Geta Brătescu, Gheorghe Iacob, Teodor Dan, Ion Stendl, Florin Ciubotaru, Maria Mihalache-Blendea, Constanța Crișan, Simona Vasiliu, Gabriela Pătulea-Drăguț, Dimitrie Grigoraș, Ileana Dăscălescu, Mariana Macri, are only a few of the artists who, for a period of time, took up tapestry. Some of them have remained faithful to it to this day, producing works of great merit.

During the early half of the 1960s, the Romanian school of tapestry was founded by painters and tapestry workers who, starting from the fundamental data of national tradition have enriched its philosophical meanings and discovered how adequately it can be integrated into modern architecture. *Maria Ciupe* (b. 1909), *Florica Vasilescu* (b. 1922), *Lucreția Pacea* (b.1924), *Graziella Stoichiță* (b. 1924), *Liana Șaru* (b. 1923), *Ileana Teodorini-Dan* (b.1924), *Maria Văgîi* (b. 1924), *Peter Jacobi* (b. 1935), *Mimi Podeanu* (1927—1975), *Ecaterina Teodorescu* (b. 1926), *Valentina Ghinea-Delaport* (b. 1926), *Ileana Balotă* (b. 1929), *Leontina Mailatescu* (b. 1932), *Gheorge Filionescu* (b. 1928) were some of the first who gave a form and sense to the new stylistic trends. Ample epic scenes, symbolic concentrations of philosophical or civic ideas, coexist with ornamental forms whose aesthetic effect is enhanced by the new techniques used during the period.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a new generation increased the number of themes and created new forms of expression. *Ariadna Nicodim* (b. 1935) *Elena Haschke-Marinescu* (b. 1936), *Teodora Moiescu-Stendl* (b. 1933), *Cornelia Ionescu* (b. 1939), *Ana Lupaș* (b. 1940), *Cella Grigoraș-Neamțu* (b. 1941), *Monica Flămînd*, *Șerbana Drăgoescu* (b. 1943), *Mariana Oloier* (b. 1943), *Ariana Trîmbițzioni* (b. 1943), *Vintilă Mihăescu* (b. 1943), *Mariana Șenilă* (b. 1944) have often fully contributed to the assertion of this art sending works to exhibitions in their country and abroad where they have always been singled out for praise and won international prizes.

The three-dimensional tapestry, the use of simple yet noble materials (manilla string with Ariadna Nicodim and Elena Haschke-Marinescu, ears

of corn and peasant fabrics, with Ana Lupaș), the unexpected combination of various materials (wood and textiles with Ion Stendl) strongly influenced the evolution of this traditional art. Ana Lupaș has imagined spectacular "events" of the *happening-type* by using only materials produced in peasants houses, while the combinations of fabrics with a grain of various kinds due to Lena Constante and Geta Brătescu, or the textiles produced by Șerbana Drăgoescu with their varied solutions in the arrangement of fibres, demonstrate the impressive development of this art.

Resorting to the fine, and subtle suggestions of Romanian folk art, to the sumptuous court costumes of the Renaissance art of clothing (Florica Vasilescu, *Doina Levința*), to metal ornaments (*Ana Mitrea*, *Florica Fărcașu*, *Doru Coadă*), to the puppets (*Valentina Andrei*, *Mireille Sîmboteanu*) have brought about a change in the mentality governing modern decorative art.

A fact worth mentioning is the early assertion of generations of artists whose works reveal from the outset an unfaltering hand in the handling of the means of expression, which has won them a rapid success.

There are evidently many artists who from their début arrested the attention of the critics and the public asserting their personality with a firmness that clearly showed their future development. There is an artistic circle active in each branch of the Romanian Union of Fine Arts which periodically organizes exhibitions where the works of their members are on show. Most of them have a gallery of their own, "Atelier 35", where only artists under 35 can have works on display; the galleries enjoy a great prestige on account of the exigent selection of the works to be shown. It is but natural that the spirit manifested here should point to a basic renewall of forms; sometimes, one can feel the eagerness of the artists (predictable in fact) to say a lot and to make an impression on the on-looker at any cost. But, in most cases, one can feel a mature aspiration towards discovering elements able to express the ideas of the artist, his attitude to reality, outward and inward reality alike.

Many of the artists who have come to the fore in the last two decades made their début in the salons of young artists at "Atelier 35" or at "Hanul cu Tei" gallery, at the students' galleries (the Students' magazines are very active in this respect), as well as at the houses of culture and university clubs. This generation looks upon the act of creatiou in earnest, meditating on the fundamental truth of existence. One can often discover certain resemblances with the art of their masters, yet this seldom changes into mere epigonism.

This is the distinctive trait of the entire contemporary Romanian art; its aspiration to modernity combines with the awareness of a stylistic continuity with the ideas on which is based: the centuries old Romanian spirituality. Responsive to world art it translates into line, colour and volume a vision which has always affirmed the participation of an authentic original culture in the construction of a universal civilization, unitary in its infinite diversity.

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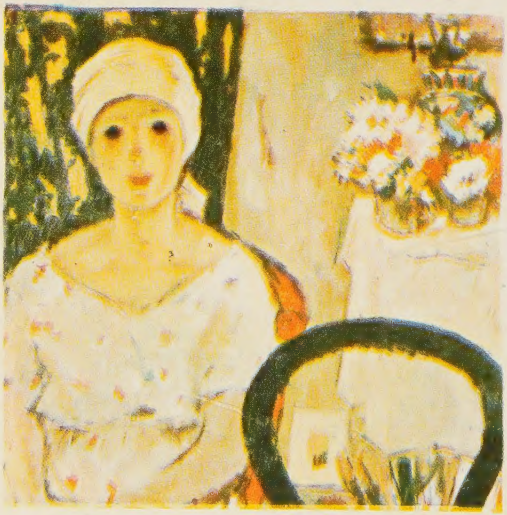

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